



Federal Ministry
of Food, Agriculture and
Consumer Protection

Federal Ministry
of Health

IN FORM

Deutschlands Initiative für gesunde Ernährung
und mehr Bewegung

IN FORM

German national initiative to promote healthy diets
and physical activity



**The National Action Plan for the prevention of
poor dietary habits, lack of physical activity,
overweight and related diseases**



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1. General Section

1.1 Declaration by the Federal Government

Germany offers excellent preconditions for a healthy life. This is reflected in life expectancy which has risen in recent decades. A baby boy born today has good prospects of reaching the age of 76.6 years, a newborn girl 82.1 years. Improved living conditions are the main reason for this extended life expectancy. It is, in principle, possible for each citizen in Germany to lead a healthy life, in particular to follow a balanced diet and to engage in sufficient physical activity. Nevertheless, in Germany and in most industrial countries diseases triggered by poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle are on the rise. This means that not everyone is in a position or chooses to make use of the opportunities that are out there. Hence, it is necessary to further improve knowledge about the links between a balanced diet, sufficient physical activity and health, to motivate people to pursue a healthy lifestyle and to create the framework conditions that foster understanding of each individual's responsibility for his/her own health and, by extension, for his/her family. In this context attention should focus on daily structures, the social environment, income, education, environment and transport.

Support for changes in behavior through information and motivation, and the further development of health-promoting structures are the key tasks of the National Action Plan. After all health is not just an individual value but also

- a precondition for wellbeing, quality of life and performance;
- an economic and location factor;

- the precondition for the stability of the contract between generations and
- a driver behind participation in society and social equity.

In Germany there are already a number of different measures and projects organized by the federal authorities, Länder, communes and civil society seeking to counteract poor eating habits, physical inactivity, overweight and the related diseases. In the key issues paper approved by the Cabinet on 9 May 2007 „A healthy diet and physical activity – the key to greater quality of life“, the Federal Government stresses the need to draw together and further develop these diverse initiatives for the first time in a national strategy seeking to strengthen and establish health-promoting daily structures in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.

“IN FORM – German national initiative to promote healthy diets and physical activity” draws on existing national action plans and federal programmes. It supplements and builds on them and promotes cross-topic and cross-stakeholder synergy effects. Mention should be made here of the National Cycling Plan (2002 – 2012), the National Action Plan „A Germany Fit for Children 2005 – 2010“, the strategy of the Federal Government to promote children's health (2008), the Federal Government-Länder Programme „Socially minded City“ (since 1999) and the investment programme „Future Education and Care“ (2003 – 2009).

The measures in the National Action Plan focus on the interaction between the various health-promoting factors. Disease prevention and health promotion take place where people live, work, learn and play – i.e. in their residential environment, in their neighborhood,

at the workplace, in day-care centres for children, in educational, senior citizen and leisure facilities and in associations. Wherever people come together regularly, a balanced diet and sufficient physical activity must become the norm.

This is all about convincing people and not about dictating to people and certainly not about discrimination. The state cannot and should not regulate individual lifestyles. Quite the contrary. The National Action Plan aims to highlight attractive ways of more effectively tackling daily requirements that are always closely linked to health and performance.

In the living environments we must, therefore, succeed in

1. improving the preconditions for a healthier diet and more physical activity;
2. motivating people by setting an example and offering them incentives to do more for their own health and
3. providing concrete offerings for people and groups in the population who had scarcely any access to health-promoting schemes in the past.

It is about filling the gaps that are frequently discernible between knowledge about a healthy lifestyle and carrying this over into health-promoting behavior. In particular it is about disseminating comprehensible information that can be used in daily life. The measures in the National Action Plan aim to bring about lasting and sustainable changes. The National Action Plan, therefore, acts on two levels:

- The bedrock of the National Action Plan consists of measures launched to achieve the common goals. They are to be coordinated by the Federal Government, Länder, communes and civil society in order to achieve structural improvements that help people to assume responsibility for a healthy lifestyle. Hence, there is a need for an orientation towards quality, target groups and the achievement of sustainability.
- A nationwide campaign will bundle the numerous activities on the topics of nutrition and physical activity and promote a healthier daily life. The campaign will draw on the engagement of the stakeholders but also fascination with the topic. After all food and physical activity are also pleasurable experiences and are closely linked to enjoyment, sharing experiences, discovery and learning.

By means of behavioral and situational changes, we want Germany not only to offer excellent conditions for a healthy lifestyle but also to enable everyone to profit from them.

1.2 Contribution of the Länder

Since the approval of the key issues „Healthy diet and physical activity – the key to healthy living“ by the federal cabinet on 9 May 2007, the Länder have been extensively involved in drawing up a National Action Plan for the Prevention of Poor Dietary Habits, Lack of Physical Activity, Overweight and Related Diseases. The 80th Conference of the Ministers of Health on 4 and 5 July 2007 and the Conference of the Ministers of Consumer Protection on 13 and 14 September 2007 expressly welcomed the Federal Government’s initiative to draw up a corresponding National Action Plan and endorsed the central objectives of the Action Plan. They pointed out that the Länder have already taken a series of steps to promote a healthy lifestyle with sufficient physical activity and a balanced diet. Continuing on from these projects, nationwide structures are to be proactively encouraged and established in the Länder and communes to improve health promotion and disease prevention. One major precondition is deemed to be the forging of lasting co-operation between all the stakeholders.

In a joint working group of the Federal Government, Länder and communes, the Länder participated in drawing up the National Action Plan. This cooperation is to be continued in the implementation of the Action Plan. This is because the Länder are also convinced that the goals of the National Action Plan can only be achieved through the joint efforts of the Federal Government, Länder, communes, self-administrative bodies, science, business and civil society.

The Länder, therefore, welcome the fact that the National Action Plan is designed as a long-term process and as an instrument of dialogue and that the Länder will participate in this dialogue through the regular exchange of programmes, strategies and examples of good practice.

1.3 Participation of civil society

In Germany, besides the state, the business community and the family, civil society is another pillar in all social developments. Civil society encompasses the totality of civic engagement and the actions of non-governmental organizations beyond state decision-making processes. When it comes to promoting a healthy lifestyle and physical activity, Germany boasts a wealth of non-governmental activities. They range from parents preparing healthy food in day-care centres for children over membership of sports clubs down to major research and intervention programmes of private foundations.

The standing of civic engagement has risen considerably over the last 10 years. The voluntary engagement of citizens has increased and this strengthens social cohesion. Besides the government levels and the business community, they are thus an important partner of the National Action Plan.

The integration of civic stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes already played a major role in the formulation of the National Action Plan. This consistent involvement of civil society should be given equal priority in its implementation.

Greater public perception and discussion of a sedentary lifestyle and overweight have led to a series of welcome initiatives and actions in this sector. For instance, the health insurance funds have become more aware of their statutory prevention remit and are particularly active in the field of nutrition and physical activity. With the backing of numerous civic stakeholders, many projects in recent years could be converted into sustainable programmes that can contribute, in turn, to the National Action Plan.

Platform Diet and Physical Activity (peb)

Dietary habits and patterns of physical activity are first and foremost a matter of personal and private choice. All the same improving these habits and patterns constitutes a challenge for society as a whole. After all, this affects the health and development opportunities of our children and adolescents.

Particularly in areas that cannot be regulated by laws there is a need for close interaction between the state and civil society. Peb bundles the concerns of large parts of civil society regarding diet and physical activity. Parents, the business community, doctors, health insurance funds, sport clubs, trade unions and all relevant social groups are represented within peb. Furthermore, it also has representatives of the Federal Government, Länder governments and communes. The peb network established in 2004 offers the best preconditions for public-private partnership.

The objectives of the Platform – to arrest the further spread of overweight and obesity amongst children and adolescents up to 2010 by means of primary prevention and health promotion and to bring the proportion of overweight children back down to the level of 1990 by 2020 – are completely in line with the goals of the National Action Plan. The Action Areas of the Platform are

consequently an integral part of the national strategy. The previous successes of peb activities and the response of the public at large confirm that the right path was chosen. The Platform Diet and Physical Activity will monitor, pool, document and communicate the contributions of civil society to preventing overweight over the next few years as well. It sees itself as a centre of excellence and as a forum for the shaping of national and international opinion. The Action Areas of the Platform extend to the life phases of the growing child:

- Using appropriate media children of pre-school and primary school age are to be familiarized with the principles of a healthy diet and the attraction of physical activity, if possible in a playful way.
- Parents and their influence on children are centre stage. Socially disadvantaged parents with a low level of education and families with a migration background require special attention and support.
- Day-care centres for children play a key role. Peb aims to bring about improvements to the framework conditions for more nutrition education and for more physical activity for children in their daily lives to complement the offerings of organized sport.
- Peb examines whether and how primary schools – the learning and life venues of children – can offer stimulus for more physical activity periods, more school sport and more physical activity in daily life (which is seen as having major potential to help solve the problem), and for extending nutrition knowledge and experiential learning whilst eating.
- The best chances of success in promoting a healthy lifestyle are when local initiatives implement local measures and develop them on structurally. That's why the Platform is also involved in creating networks of local institutions, identifying their mechanisms of action, strengths and weaknesses, and disseminating the findings.

Peb is active in both areas – diet and physical activity. In all its work it draws on the expertise of science and, as far as possible, has its activities scientifically evaluated. An expert advisory board, consisting of recognized scientists and experts, advises peb. In its overall activities peb sees itself as a bridge between civil society and public services of general interest. Peb calls on everyone to take action for a common cause.

www.ernaehrungundbewegung.de

Federal Association for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (BVPG)

The Federal Association for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (BVPG) emerged from the merger between the Federal Health Association (BfGe) and the German Forum for Prevention and Health Promotion (DFPG) in 2007. BVPG currently has 127 member organisations including more particularly federal health associations (for instance the German Medical Association, the umbrella associations of the social security agencies and associations of the health care and paramedical professions), social and welfare associations, educational institutions and academies with a focus on „disease prevention and health promotion“. BVPG, which enjoys institutional support from the Federal Ministry of Health, represents the relevant civil forces in the field of disease prevention and health promotion on the federal level. It brings them together with state authorities and the nationwide social security agencies.

Hence BVPG will involve civil forces especially in the implementation of the National Action Plan.

Particularly within its three working groups – WG 1 „Healthy kindergarten and schools“, WG 2 „In-company health-promotion“ and WG 3 „Growing old healthily“ but also in its more extensive communication, co-ordination and networking tasks, BVPG will be actively involved in the implementation of the National Action Plan.

- For the **Action Area 2** „Information on diet, physical activity and health“, BVPG member associations already have quality requirements, findings and recommendations at their disposal. Information of this nature could be disseminated in the BVPG Newsletter and can be accessed on the BVPG website.
- For the **Action Area 3** „Physical activity in daily life“ recommendations for implementation are formulated in the above-mentioned BVPG working groups and partners proposed, e.g. for the topics „Prevention of postural deformities“ in children and adolescents, „Reducing the incidence and severity of musculo-skeletal impairments and diseases“ in companies and „Promoting physical activity in later life“.
- In the **Action Area 4** „Improving the quality of away-from-home catering“, assistance can also be sought from the BVPG member associations that are involved above all in the settings „kindergarten“, „school“, „hospital“, and „company“. The findings are to be pooled and made accessible to the target groups.

Furthermore, BVPG and its members will promote the transfer and structural anchoring of successful measures. In this context it will adopt a data-based and criteria-driven approach.

www.bvpraevention.de

1.4 Initial situation

The results of health reporting by the Federal Government, the German Health Survey 1998, the German Health Survey for Children and Adolescents 2006 (KiGGS) and the National Food Consumption Study II 2007 prove that poor eating habits and inadequate physical activity are major problems in Germany. They increase the risk of health disorders.

Clear trend towards overweight and obesity

Overweight is the result of higher energy intake than energy expenditure. This often means that people eat food that is too fatty and sweet and, at the same time, do not engage in regular physical activity. The reasons for this are changing social conditions that influence the population's dietary habits and patterns of physical activity. Various factors play a role: a larger offering of often energy-dense foods and beverages available everywhere, rising motorization, increasingly sedentary professional activities, not enough attractive play areas for children in their neighborhood and a large range of leisure activities involving little physical activity.

In Germany 66 % of men and 51 % of women aged between 18 and 80 and 15 % of children and adolescents (0 – 17 years of age) are overweight or obese. As people grow older the proportion of overweight and obese individuals rises. Whereas roughly one-quarter of young adults aged between 18 and 19 are overweight or obese, this proportion rises to 84 % for men and 74 % for women up to the age of 70 – 80 years and then falls. Over the last 10 years the proportion of overweight and obese young men has risen by around 8 % and of young women by approximately 7 %.

Slight overweight (Body Mass Index/BMI over 25; calculated by dividing height by weight) does not necessarily mean there is an elevated health risk. What is problematic is the collection of body fat around the stomach and waist. A larger waist (in men from 94 cm, in women from 80 cm) is deemed to be a major risk factor for diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Obesity (BMI over 30) very probably leads to chronic secondary diseases like cardiovascu-

lar complaints, diabetes, lipid metabolism disorders and orthopaedic complaints. This impairs quality of life and reduces life expectancy.

Overweight is not evenly distributed throughout society. As per capita income grows, the proportion of overweight or obese men and woman falls. The lowest proportion of obese men and women is found in the highest income group (16 % women and 14 % men). The higher the level of education, the lower the average BMI of men and women.

Physical inactivity is predominant

The health-promoting impact of physical activity, including its contribution to stress management, has been scientifically established. Physical activity plays a particularly important role in preventing chronic disease, averting health risk factors in particular overweight and obesity and in strengthening health resources – wellbeing, self-esteem, social integration.

Nevertheless, no age group gets enough exercise. Overall 37 % of men and 38 % of women do not do any kind of sport. Children and adolescents are more active than adults but even in this group physical fitness and motor skills are less honed than in the past. This, in turn, can lead to both reduced performance and the ability to concentrate, and has consequences for physical and mental development. Adults frequently perceive their professional and family life as a potential obstacle to active recreation. Furthermore, as people grow older they engage less in sports activities.

Older people frequently feel they are no longer capable of being active physically and doing sports. An environment with few attractive incentives for physical activity merely serves to entrench this attitude.

Increased incidence of disturbed eating habits down to eating disorders

More and more people have an ambivalent attitude towards food and develop disturbed eating habits involving various restrictions (I'll never eat sweets again, no fatty foods etc.), diets or distorted body images. In some cases, this is coupled with excessive physical activity. This can lead to the onset of eating disorders like bulimia, anorexia, binge eating or atypical forms of eating disorders. Young people are particularly prone. One in five 11 – 7 year-olds manifests symptoms of eating disorders; girls are affected twice as frequently as boys.

Eating disorders are psychosomatic disorders that must be treated medically. Clearly disturbed eating habits are the first alarm signal. Preventive measures must begin early on before the onset of full blown eating disorders. The extremely slim beauty ideal, which is often propagated by the fashion and advertising industry, can exacerbate this. Young people, especially young girls, are easily influenced by the pictures in the media and try to imitate them.

Poor dietary habits and under nutrition increase as people grow older

In later life, too, the interplay of diet and physical activity has a decisive impact on health. The nutritional situation of healthy, mobile and above all younger senior citizens living in their own homes does not differ markedly from that of younger people.

The situation is different in the case of people suffering from age-related diseases, physical handicaps, mental impairments (dementia) and mental problems or who have experienced changes in their social situation. People in this group, particularly the very elderly, are increasingly underweight and undernourished. For various reasons like lack of appetite, changed vitamin intake, medication, inadequate food intake or reduced consumption of certain foods, sufficient nutrient and liquid intake is often no longer guaranteed. In the case of individuals living in their own homes, external conditions like the lack of local shopping opportunities, an inadequate product offering or problems in preparing meals can also contribute to undernutrition.

A poor nutritional status is sometimes only noticed when infirm people with several disorders (multi-morbidity) are admitted to geriatric hospitals and old people's homes. This may also explain why there are higher proportions of undernourished people in these facilities.

1.5 Goals of the National Action Plan

Objective: The National Action Plan will sustainably improve the dietary habits and patterns of physical activity in Germany.

The goals are for:

- 1. adults to live healthier lives, children to grow up more healthily and to enjoy a better quality of life as well as improved performance in education, professional and private life.**

2. the diseases caused by an unhealthy lifestyle, a one-sided diet and a sedentary lifestyle to be markedly reduced.

In order to achieve these goals,

- efforts are to be pooled and directed towards common goals, the achievement of which must be regularly monitored;
- strategies are to be developed and measures for their implementation strengthened that engage individual behavior and take into account the regional and national levels;
- the framework conditions that enable people to pursue a health-promoting life-style are to be lastingly and sustainably improved.

By 2020 visible results are to be achieved.

Success will be measured in terms of how the use of the available opportunities to have a balanced diet and engage in physical activity and how the creation of new offerings bring about positive changes in dietary habits and patterns of physical activity and how overweight in the population and the prevalence of the above-mentioned diseases fall. Goals, partial goals and initial measures are outlined in the Action Areas that were laid down in 2007. Health reports and the results of regular monitoring are important tools for documenting success.

In Germany an environment is to be created in which a balanced diet and sufficient physical activity are firmly anchored in all areas of life. To achieve this, close co-operation is needed between political circles, health care, civil society, the business community, media and as many other stakeholders as possible from the social sphere. To this end, existing structures are to be used, parallel structures developed and the resources of all the stakeholders pooled.

The National Action Plan seeks to:

1. convey the importance of a healthy diet and sufficient physical activity for people's health.

2. formulate recommendations for dietary habits and patterns of physical activity behavior in a target group-specific and implementation-oriented manner.
3. create or improve structures that encourage individuals to assume responsibility for a healthy lifestyle combined with a balanced diet and sufficient physical activity.
4. forge links between stakeholders and measures that contribute to an extended, coordinated offering.
5. publicize good projects and best practice and promote transparency about the quality, scale and financing of the offerings and how their success is measured.

The National Action Plan is to encourage transparency, networking and co-operation and to offer a roof to existing engagement.

1.6 The path to a National Strategy

- Against the backdrop of growing overweight worldwide and the related diseases of modern society, WHO approved in 2004 a Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. It also called on its member countries to develop national strategies to prevent the non-communicable diseases caused in part by lifestyle by means of a health-promoting diet and more physical activity. On November 2006 the WHO European Ministerial Conference in Istanbul adopted a Charter on Counteracting Obesity in the European WHO region.
- The prevention of poor dietary habits and physical inactivity has also been recognized as a central challenge on the European level. In 2005 the European Commission highlighted the importance of this topic for European policy in its Green Paper „*Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases*“.
- It further developed this subject in its White Paper „*A strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues*“ in 2007. Furthermore in 2005 the European Commission launched the European Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health in which the business community, associations and organizations have signed up to taking reviewable

steps for the prevention of overweight. In 2007 during the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, it adopted the *Conclusions on strengthening health promotion and disease prevention by means of balanced nutrition and sufficient physical activity*.

- On the national level the emphasis was initially on initiatives to improve the networking between prevention stakeholders. The German Forum for Prevention and Health Promotion was founded in 2002 by the Federal Ministry of Health and taken over in 2008 into the *Federal Association for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (BVPG)*. Today, BVPG numbers some 127 prevention associations and organizations. The goal is to anchor and strengthen a coordinated preventive and health-promoting orientation not only in the German health system but in all areas of policy and life. In this context diet and physical activity have always played a central role.
 - On the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection the *Platform Diet and Physical Activity (peb)* was set up in 2004, prior to the establishment of the EU Platform. Peb is a merger of approximately 100 members from politics, the business community, science, parents, doctors, health insurance funds, sport and trade unions. Its members include the Federal Government as well as some Länder governments and communes. Peb has set itself the task of promoting a balanced diet and considerable physical activity amongst children and adolescents.
 - One important initiative of the Länder, which is based on a resolution of the Conference of the Ministers of Health and also has the support of the Federal Government, was the setting up of the Forum *gesundheitsziele.de* (health objectives) in 1999. The aim of this national health objectives process is to develop and implement common objectives with the support of a wide range of experts. Health objectives have proved their worth as an additional steering instrument for prevention-oriented health policy. One of the six health objectives that was approved is „Growing up healthily: diet, physical activity, stress management“ together with its goals, sub-goals and measures. Since 2007 *gesundheitsziele.de* has been continued as a cooperation alliance of all relevant health care stakeholders.
- ### Important steps on the path towards a comprehensive action plan
- The Federal Government chose prevention for health through diet and physical activity as one of the main topics of the German EU Presidency in 2007. At the *Prevention for Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity – The Key to Healthy Living* conference staged during its Council Presidency, it became clear that progress in the prevention of diseases caused by lifestyle is dependent on actions across various policy areas.
 - With the key issues *Healthy Diet and Physical Activity – A Key to Healthy Living* the Federal Government laid down the main principles and the key Action Areas for a National Action Plan for the Prevention of Poor Dietary Habits, Lack of Physical Activity, Overweight and Related Diseases on 9 May 2007.
 - With the setting up of an inter-ministerial working group and a Federal GovernmentLänder-Commune working group, the main structures were put in place for involving all political levels and relevant policy areas. Furthermore, civil society, the business community and science were included in the process of developing ideas and measures by means of written opinions, workshops and expert discussions. These structures are also to be used for the further shaping and implementation of the National Action Plan.
 - When drawing up the National Action Plan it became clear that many of the existing good practice measures of the Federal Government, Länder and communes can be used to achieve the goals. This is dependent on comprehensive, systematic processing and the uniform, nationwide compilation and publication of these measures.
 - The National Action Plan, which has now been submitted, is the starting point for sustainable development in Germany. Improvements to dietary habits and patterns of physical activity can only be achieved in a learning system. The National Action Plan is a dynamic instrument of dialogue that must be implemented and further developed with all the relevant stakeholders. The Federal Government encourages the necessary changes with „IN FORM – German national initiative to promote healthy diets and physical activity“.

2. Key Action Areas

The measures in the National Action Plan concentrate on five key Action Areas which were already specified in the key issues adopted on 9 May 2007:

1. **Public authorities serve as an example**
2. **Education and information about diet, physical activity and health**
3. **Physical activity in daily life**
4. **Improving the quality of away-from-home catering**
5. **Fresh impetus for research**

The goals of the respective Action Areas and the main measures are described in detail, the competencies for implementation are named and examples given for activities that are already up and running. Based on these key issues measures have already been launched in order to trigger the necessary changes and pave the way for achieving the goals of the National Action Plan.

2.1 Action Area 1: Federal Government, Länder and communes set an example

Objective: The Federal Government, Länder and communes set an example concerning the promotion of a healthy diet and physical activity habits.

1. In its sphere of competence the Federal Government promotes greater transparency and the quality of the offerings and measures for healthy dietary habits and patterns of physical activity.
2. Health impact assessment in federal legislation leads to a strengthening of health-promoting framework conditions.

3. When allocating public funds, aspects of health promotion are also taken into account in the areas of diet and physical activity.
4. The Federal Government, Länder and communes assume greater responsibility as employers for the health of their employees.
5. In their capacity as the funding bodies of community facilities in the field of education, care and health, the Federal Government, Länder and communes improve the framework conditions with a view to promoting healthy dietary habits and patterns of physical activity within these facilities.

The decisions taken by public authorities frequently have a direct or indirect impact on health. Greater consideration is to be given to health effects during the decision-making process.

The promotion of healthy lifestyles through physical activity and diet is a task in many areas of policy. Major decisions for the future are taken not only by health and food policy but also in the areas of urban planning, transport planning, research, business development, family, environmental, agricultural, sport and social policies. Only by anchoring this overarching issue in various policy areas will it be possible to achieve major improvements in the physical activity and diet situation in Germany. This challenge affects all political levels from the European over the Federal Government and Land level down to the commune. Lasting changes can only be brought about through targeted coordination of the measures of all the federal ministries concerned, the Länder and communes.

With the National Action Plan the Federal Government, Länder and communes strive to set an example.

2.1.1 Creation of transparency

Over the last 10 years there has been an increase in programmes aiming to preventing poor dietary habits, physical inactivity, overweight and related diseases. In particular the diverse activities of the statutory health insurance funds, sports clubs and commercial providers have increased fourfold since the beginning of the 1990s. The reach of many projects and measures is, however, still limited and when it comes to quality the programmes differ considerably. Even today many primary prevention projects are conducted without the initial situation being analyzed, objectives formulated or suitable strategies developed.

The Federal Government first creates transparency about the existing project and action structure in the area of diet and physical activity. The 13th Children and Youth Report of the Federal Government on health-related prevention and health promotion in child and youth welfare services for instance will provide an overview of the approaches and concepts of a healthy diet and age-appropriate forms of physical activity. The report will be presented in the second quarter of 2009.

In a second step the quality of the measures is to be improved by guaranteeing – through the establishment of quality standards – that scientifically backed quality assurance and evaluation are part of preventive intervention. In this context the costs of evaluation must be proportionate to the intervention measure. The identification and publication of models of good and effective practice also help to avoid unnecessary investment which still happens as a consequence of parallel developments and a lack of networking. Based on existing structures a database is also to be made available.

2.1.2 Federal Government and Länder as the legislator

The bills, ordinances and guidelines of the Federal Government and the Länder are already examined today from the angle of their economic, ecological and social impact. Up to now, the health effects of federal acts have been examined within the framework of regulatory impact assessment. The main health impact must be outlined in the legislative intent. Evaluation of the potential and actual affects on the health of the population and individual groups within the population can pave the way for a higher level of health across the population. Corresponding methods, processes and instruments are to be developed.

Since the reintroduction of health promotion and disease prevention services pursuant to Article 20 (1) of the Fifth Book of the Social Code through the 2000 health reform, the health insurance funds offer insured persons courses on a healthy diet and sufficient physical activity, to a growing extent as combined programmes.

However, there are still not enough local measures in the direct living environment of people for instance in day-care centers for children, schools, companies, senior citizen facilities and in their respective neighborhood. What are needed are public measures. In addition, social security agencies can, within the sphere of their competencies, provide more health promotion and disease prevention schemes in the direct living environment. Special attention is to be paid to specific risk groups with a view to establishing equal health opportunities. These offerings are flanked by high impact measures to raise health awareness. To this end, institutional frameworks are to be created. Disease prevention and health promotion are to be elevated to an independent pillar of health care.

2.1.3 Federal Government, Länder and communes as funders and investors

The annual investments by the Federal Government, Länder and the communes in infrastructure, research and other areas add up to a massive amount. Wherever the Federal Government, Länder and communes commission building projects, procurements and support measures, the health effects are to be taken into account in future, too.

2.1.4 Federal Government, Länder and communes as employers

Approximately 4.5 million people are employed in the public services of the Federal Government, Länder and communes. This makes them the largest employer in Germany.

Systematic health management has not yet been introduced on all levels. There is major potential for improving the health of employees and measures of this kind could, at the same time, set an example for other employers. Good in-house health promotion improves the performance of employees and also contributes to the success of a public administration. Individual wellbeing and motivation are promoted and the risk of sickness absence is reduced. This is one way of reducing costs. There are various options: balanced diet in canteens, physical activity schemes and health-promoting workplace design. This

could already begin during training in federal agencies. For instance the youth campaign „Feeling Good“ of the Federal Centre for Health Education (BzgA) is to be used in 2009 in conjunction with trainee support in public agencies.

FEELING GOOD

The FEELING GOOD campaign of the Federal Centre for Health Education focuses on health promotion in the areas of diet, physical activity and stress regulation in all places frequented by children and adolescents (12–18 years of age) (schools, leisure centres, youth hostels etc.). The partners comply with set standards in order to integrate physical activity into daily life and sports activities into the living environment of the adolescents and support them. By linking up the various stakeholders synergies are tapped and the durability of the impact is increased. This makes the transfer from the school to other living environments easier.

www.gutdrauf.net

With its Cabinet decision of 28 February 2007, the Federal Government committed all ministries and public agencies in the implementation plan for the government programme „Future-oriented administrations through innovation“ to implementing systematic inhouse health-promotion.

Systematic health promotion in the Federal Government

- Introduction of systematic, longer term and reviewable in-house health promotion as part of HR and organisational development in all ministries.
- Timely and permanent support for staff employability.
- Further extension of the competencies of senior managers in the area of in-house health promotion.

2.1.5 Länder and communes as the funding agencies of community facilities in the fields of education, training, care and health

Länder and communes are the main funding agencies of community facilities in the field of education, training, care and health. More than 90 % of all schools and universities are publicly financed. In other areas for instance day-care centres for children, hospitals, oldpeople's homes and facilities for the handicapped the communes are an important local funding agency. Other funding agencies of facilities like charities and churches can act

as an example. The public sector defines the framework conditions for publicly funded community facilities. This responsibility is to be viewed and perceived systematically from the health angle, too. There are a few models of good practice.

Initial measures in the National Action Plan

- Health management has been further improved in public administrations. Concrete shape has been given to “Health as the model of a modern agency“. In this context the National Action Plan proposes the exchange of information.
- The Federal Government examines to what extent the health effects of investment projects can be taken into account when allocating funds.
- The Federal Government seeks to ensure that existing and future recommendations on improving dietary habits and patterns of physical activity are implemented to a greater degree in publicly funded community facilities.

2.2 Action Area 2: Information on diet, physical activity and health

Objective: The schemes for nutrition and physical activity education enable people to lead healthy lives and heighten their own sense of responsibility.

1. The yardstick for measuring the quality of information for citizens on diet, physical activity and health is the day-to-day viability of the messages conveyed.
2. The qualifications of providers involved in awareness-raising and information building schemes improved.
3. The offerings providing information on dietary and physical activity are intended for all age groups. In order to be able to convey their contents in a target group oriented manner, they are tailored to their respective needs and living environments.
4. All social stakeholders contribute to the responsible handling of information seeking to raise awareness of diet and physical activity amongst the population at large.

There is a discrepancy between theoretical knowledge about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the concrete carry-over to daily behavior. Although most people are familiar with the principles of a healthy lifestyle,

they still develop or stick to dietary habits and patterns of physical activity that can have a negative impact on health.

There are various reasons for this:

- Generally speaking, the population at large has the essential information but does not sufficiently bear it in mind in practice.
- Many people are either overtaxed by the wealth or the content of the recommendations and don't succeed in extracting the statements of relevance for them.
- Information about diet and physical activity is frequently so general that it misses daily realities.
- In many cases, the facts about diet and physical activity and the effects of stress are still dealt with separately and the direct impact on health is often not clearly shown.
- Often there are no generally recognized standards that could contribute to the more convincing dissemination of knowledge. They are, however, the precondition for the communication of uniform messages in living environments in which a healthy diet and sufficient physical activity are important topics like day-care centres for children, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods. This impedes lasting improvements to behavior.
- Efforts must be made to improve the networking of stakeholders, i.e. the multipliers. Up to now, the potential of networked procedures has not been fully tapped in many areas. Holistic approaches are still not the rule when it comes to the dissemination of knowledge.

2.2.1 Quality of the information

When disseminating information seeking to improve patterns of behavior, the most important aspect is its viability for day-to-day life. Key statements about a balanced diet and health-promoting physical activities must first fulfill the goal of giving people a sense of orientation. Information offers orientation in daily life when it is trustworthy, reliable, comparable, generally comprehensible and can be easily translated into practical actions. This applies to all areas in which information about diet and physical activity is disseminated. This starts with pregnant women, extends over infant formula, educational institutions, training, professions, care institutions down to daily decisions about leisure activities, choice of transport and shopping.

The wealth of information on diet and physical activity leads to considerable confusion. Many people are un-

able to identify which recommendations they should follow. Together with the Länder and scientific circles, the Federal Government will carry forward the process of agreeing on central recommendations on dietary habits and patterns of physical activity. Furthermore, the Federal Government, together with the Länder and civil society, will work towards creating a coordinated system of education, comprehensible information and concrete offerings.

2.2.2 Qualifications of knowledge providers

The National Action Plan backs efforts to improve the qualifications of knowledge providers in the fields of diet and physical activity. This is to be achieved by anchoring basic diet and practical physical activity modules in initial, further and continuing training in education, health and social professions. What is also important is the greater integration of diet and practical physical activity modules into training programmes for the nursing professions.

Furthermore, it is desirable for there to be some explanation of the links between diet and physical activity in the initial and further training of volunteers. Patterns of behavior, particularly in sport, social and civic engagement, are frequently shaped by the examples that are set.

When it comes to nutritional and physical activity education and guidance, the qualifications of the instructors are frequently not transparent. The decisive factors for qualification are the type and scale of higher education or initial, further and continuing training. There is a major qualitative difference between comprehensive academic training in nutritional science, sports science or psychology and continuing training seminars lasting a few days. In order to create more orientation in this sector, transparency must be established about providers that underwent training for example in universities, universities of the applied sciences or professional associations. The "DGE Nutritional Guidance Curriculum" (2005) of the German Nutrition Society (DGE) and the „Framework agreement for quality assurance in nutritional guidance and nutrition education in Germany“ offer key criteria for nutritional guidance. Similar recommendations must be jointly developed for the area of physical activity.

2.2.3 Targeted information building

Within the framework of the National Action Plan multipliers, experts and decision-makers receive targeted support to enable them to communicate the contents to

the specific target groups in an expert manner. Hence the Federal Government, Länder and associations are to actively seek and establish an ongoing dialogue to ensure that targeted information and skill building can be tested and findings passed on. The Federal Government will launch expert discussions with the various professional groups.

When it comes to health promotion for people with a migrant background it is important to make creative use of the many positive, intercultural and integrative aspects in the areas of diet, sport and physical activity.

The decisive factor when it comes to knowledge and skill building is for the information offerings to be provided early on and to accompany people throughout their lives. For instance young families are given a corresponding information and motivation offering together with midwives, gynecologists, GPs and paediatricians, maternity hospitals, educators and day-care staff. All the main aspects like breastfeeding, suitable nutrition plans and physical activity for children, preventing overweight and eating disorders are to be covered. Here it will be important not to overload families with too many offers but rather to implement a coordinated information building process.

The Kinderleicht Regions: 24 pioneers spread across Germany

The goal of the pilot project „Kinderleicht Regions“ is to create incentives for the development of new local, regional and social space initiatives and to network existing structures that advocate a healthy diet and sufficient physical activity. 24 regional networks demonstrate the methods, pathways and partners that can help to prevent the onset of overweight in children in a timely and lasting manner. The various measures are intended for children from the time of their birth up to the end of primary school. The aim is to create sustainable structures that will endure even after the termination of support. Day-care centres for children, schools, associations and families are to work together as a team. Parents or families are included in the concept because they, too, must grasp the importance of a balanced diet and physical activity and be willing to make their own contribution to the health of their children.

www.besseressenmehrbewegen.de

The basic rules for a balanced diet, child-oriented stress management and sufficient physical activity should all be part of appropriate child development schemes. In addition,

the promotion of media literacy must already start amongst children in kindergarten and their parents as media consumption is a major contributory factor to the onset and persistence of overweight.

Targeted health support for day-care centres for children is a priority task of the Länder, communes and funding agencies of these facilities. It is backed by the Federal Government within the framework of the „Quality offensive for education and support in early childhood“ and in the „Action programme day care for children“. This applies in particular to the elaboration of a comprehensive concept for the pedagogic care of children under the age of three and for the qualification of daycare staff.

With the pilot project „Healthy Kindergarten – Strong Children“ the Platform Diet and Physical Activity (peb) takes up existing structures and project experiences in the pre-school sector. Through interaction with families, children, pedagogical staff, funding agencies, specialised administrations and local network partners, health promotion is to be incorporated into the daily educational work in daycare centres for children.

On the way to Doesmegood

The „On the way to Doesmegood“ campaign of the Federal Centre for Health Education (BzgA) is aimed at children

aged between 5 and 11. The goal is to create nationwide health-promoting structures in children's living environments. It takes into account the integrated approach to children's health in the areas diet, physical activity and stress regulation recommended by gesundheitsziele.de.

Through the schools the children, teachers and families are encouraged – with the help of an interactive hands-on exhibition and a music show – to take a critical look at their own health. A media map for use in schools helps teachers to incorporate what they have learned into daily school activities. By means of regular training courses multipliers are qualified to implement health support in their living environment. Institutions which meet the quality standards of „On the way to Doesmegood“ are certified.

www.tutmirgut.net

In-school health promotion helps to develop and improve the quality of schools. It is important for holistic health promotion concepts to be developed in schools and integrated into the school curriculum. Holistic concepts of in-school health promotion include instruction and

extra-curricular areas. Furthermore, these measures allow the school to raise its profile and embrace supplementary offerings and diverse cooperation relations for instance in the field of sports and physical activity. A holistic approach to in-school health promotion also means that all the contents of health promotion like diet, physical activity and stress management are incorporated into an integrated concept. Furthermore, particularly within the framework of full-day school offerings, there is an explicit development option for in-school health-promotion measures in extra-curricular areas.

Health objective “Growing up healthily”

Within the framework of the forum „gesundheitsziele.de“, the formulation of the health objective „Growing up healthily“ was coupled with the presentation of an integrated concept for linking up the relevant topics, diet, physical activity and stress management for the settings kindergarten, schools, family and recreation. The development of offerings for socially disadvantaged girls and boys, mothers and fathers plays a special role in the proposed schemes.

www.gesundheitsziele.de

The anchoring of health-relevant topics like diet and physical activity in the curricula is the foundation for targeted, systematic, overarching health education in schools. Schoolbased nutrition and consumer education must be based on living environment experiences and take up day-to-day ideas. Knowledge, skills, values and motivations should serve to analyse, reflect on and shape the living environment. In this way the meaning of and limits to changes in eating habits and action structures can be dealt with in an appropriate and successful way, action options can be extended and new orientations made possible. Besides education, the shaping of educational sites as health-promoting spaces is essential. The positive experiences with a good diet can be of central importance for sensible „taste preferences“. In this context recourse should be made to the pilot project Reform of Nutrition and Consumer Education in Schools (REVIS) of the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection.

Together with the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, efforts should be made to find ways of more effectively integrating the promotion of a healthy diet, physical activity and stress management options into daily curricular and extra-curricular activities in schools.

Licence to eat better: The aid nutrition licence

The „aid nutrition licence“ is a nutrition education scheme for third grade pupils in primary schools. It imparts daily skills and basic knowledge about the origin, processing and preparation of foods and a healthy diet.

The media package of aid infodienst, which has been tested in practice and has been available since November 2007, is popular with teachers and used in schools. The innovative offering on nutrition and consumer education is publicised at meetings of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and Länder institutes. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection promotes the dissemination of the aid nutrition licence in co-operation with the German Rural Women's Association through the use of rural women as multipliers.

At the beginning of the school year 2007/2008 rural women trained by aid for work in the schoolroom support teachers when it comes to implementing the aid nutrition licence. This co-operation initially reached 2,650 school classes. There are plans for the further development and further support of this concept within the framework of the National Action Plan. Amongst other things, efforts will be made to offer effective support for implementation in schools through other suitable multiplier groups.

www.aid-ernaehrungsfuehrerschein.de
www.landfrauen.info

Within the framework of in-house health promotion *companies* are to support their employees when it comes to eating more healthily and engaging in more physical activity. In this context larger companies can draw on the expertise of their in-house physicians and other professional groups in order to better coordinate their in-house health promotion programmes. Corresponding schemes have to be put in place for small and medium-sized enterprises. The Federal Government will put together an information package to support companies which can be accessed and used by employers and employee representatives.

In later life a balanced diet coupled with considerable physical activity is the foundation for performance and quality of life. Suitable and wholesome food can help to ward off undesirable deficiency symptoms and is a major precondition for people enjoying a lengthy life and retaining their independence for as long as possible. In the case of measures for older people, what is particularly important is the differentiated presentation of information. Diet

and physical activity offerings must be oriented towards the differing needs of older people like independent senior citizens, people with chronic diseases, the infirm and bed-ridden and their relatives who look after them.

In response to this need, the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) will promote structures and projects with the emphasis on „Healthy in later life“ on the municipal level aiming to achieve integrated improvements to dietary habits, patterns of physical activity behavior and mental health (particularly when it comes to stress management). They will seek out ways of accessing people over the age of 60 in their living environments and helping them embrace healthy habits in their daily lives. Furthermore, within the Forum gesundheitsziele.de a new objective „Growing older“ will be formulated with the main stakeholders.

Fit in later life – Eat healthily, live better

With the campaign „Fit in later life“ the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection seeks to improve nutritional knowledge and dietary habits and, by extension, health in later life whilst taking into account the various life situations.

The consumer advice centres and DGE offer information and training courses for consumers and experts. At the same time, in co-operation with the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) further training events for senior citizens' associations are staged following a demand analysis.

www.fitimalter.de

In this context, it's also about linking up the various target groups in order to promote joint learning. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth supports -within the framework of the action programme multigenerational homes - healthpromoting measures in the field of diet and physical activity. Many of the 500 multigenerational homes around the country have a number of low threshold offerings intended for all the generations that motivate people to engage in a mutual exchange.

2.2.4 Responsible handling of information

Civil society is an important multiplier for transporting information thereby creating a broad information and experience base on the foundations of a healthy diet and the importance of physical activity in daily life – irrespective

of age, life phase and gender. Quality assured initiatives to promote a healthy lifestyle are supported.

Associations can support the goals of the National Action Plan in the field of information dissemination by using their structures to raise awareness about dietary habits and patterns of physical activity and by making corresponding offerings available. The goal is to motivate people to adopt a healthy life-style. For instance, scientific associations and consumer advice centres can provide reliable information.

In line with their statutory mandate, the *statutory health insurance funds* are important partners and multipliers when it comes to building knowledge about nutrition and physical activity. They have agreed on common goals in their offerings to support a health-enhancing lifestyle. In primary prevention nutrition, physical activity and stress management are key areas of action. For all their health-promoting services they have binding, uniform quality requirements concerning needs, efficacy, target groups, contents, methodology and user qualifications that reflect the latest scientific health findings.

The *“media”* are to contribute to improving the health behavior of the population by means of the responsible depiction of knowledge about nutrition and physical activity. The public media bear considerable responsibility when it comes to disseminating the central contents of the National Action Plan.

The *“business community”* has a special responsibility when it comes to advertising particularly when it is targeted at children and adolescents. As a consequence of the current amendment to the Act against Unfair Competition (UWG), new binding standards will be established in conjunction with the implementation of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. Together with the business community, the Federal Government will discuss what additional rules are needed that could be set out in a code of conduct. One of the goals will be to forego advertising targeting children under the age of 12. For older children and adolescents the Federal Government, together with the business community and the German Advertising Council, will set down in a key issues paper the main rules for advertising activities. In this context, the German Advertising Council (DW) and the Central Association of the German Advertising Industry (ZAW) have already done important groundwork. All the media are to be covered by the additional rules. Besides the classical advertising channels, rules must also be drawn up for advertising on mobile phones and the Internet.

There is a major responsibility to disseminate quality assured information not only in advertising but also in direct customer approaches and in activities within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection has drawn up a Guideline on extended nutritional information on packaged food in order to improve consumer information about the nutritional value of foods and make it easier for consumers to choose foods that form part of a healthy, balanced diet. The guideline was presented to the public on 30 May 2008.

Responsible actions also include the communication of a healthy body image and beauty ideal as this can help to prevent distorted eating behavior and the development of eating disorders. The fashion and advertising industry can help by undertaking not to allow clearly anorexic models to appear on the catwalk or in ads. With the initiative „Life has weight – Join forces against the beauty mania“, the Federal Government involves all the relevant stakeholders and is supported by an expert body. To prevent the onset of eating disorders, it is very important that from a very early age children experience a healthy diet, sufficient physical activity and family meals as part of their daily routine. This enables them to develop healthy self-esteem.

Initial measures of the National Action Plan:

- To improve networking between the main stakeholders, a working group is set up entitled „Information building on diet, physical activity and health“.
- By means of the systematic presentation of services within the framework of quality-assured nutritional guidance and therapy on the website of the National Action Plan, transparency is improved and an overview given of quality standards in higher education or in the providers' initial, further and continuing education and training programmes.
- On the website of the National Action Plan target group-specific awarenessraising material is made available. This must reflect not only gender, age and education level but also cultural and linguistic aspects.
- The National Action Plan promotes integrated projects on dietary habits and patterns of physical activity. Links to other socio-cultural activities in the various living environments are also to be forged.

- Multipliers must undergo training to enable them to transmit the knowledge to the respective living environments in day-care centres for children, schools and senior citizen facilities and then adapt it to their respective needs.
- In-company health promotion is an important concern of the Federal Government. This can only be achieved together with the two sides of industry. Improvements can be made by disseminating information on a healthy diet at the workplace or by encouraging employees to engage in physical activity.
- The Federal Government discusses with the business community and the Advertising Council codes of conduct for advertising targeted at children and adolescents.
- As a consequence of demographic change, the problems of poor dietary habits and undernourishment will take on increasing importance as people grow older. The Federal Government will set up a working group to elaborate viable, future-oriented concepts.
- The initiative „Life has weight – Join forces against the beauty mania“ seeking to prevent eating disorders is to be developed further. In 2008 the dialogue was intensified with young people and the fashion industry entered into a voluntary undertaking.
- The Federal Government will continue to support the cooperation alliance „Health promotion for the socially disadvantaged“ in order to make a comprehensive contribution to more equal health opportunities in co-operation with the public sector and civil society.

2.3 Action Area 3: Physical activity in daily life

Objective: As a rule, people in Germany engage in regular physical activity and sports. Their living environments offer sufficiently attractive incentives for physical activity.

1. Target group-oriented measures are integrated for each age group. The emphasis is on groups with a sedentary lifestyle.
2. In order to achieve health effects, the daily physical activity programmes must be oriented towards quality criteria.

3. The living environments are given sufficient incentives for physical and sports activities.

The positive effects of an active lifestyle on health, life quality and life expectancy have been convincingly established by the sciences. However, up to now these findings have not been sufficiently carried over into daily life. In Germany, too, people are not active enough. And yet the advantages quickly become clear to the individual. What's more, physical activity offers lasting benefits by reducing the risk of developing diseases of modern society. As long as there are corresponding schemes, people can be physically active in any life phase and different life situation, even people with handicaps, chronic diseases or social burdens. Wherever people can move, it is important to create motivation and incentives for physical activity in daily lives. Firstly, it is about physical activity on a daily basis (e.g. cycling or climbing stairs) and its health-promoting effects but also about linking daily physical activity with institutionalized physical activity e.g. health promotion in educational institutions, companies and with health-promoting, fitness, handicapped or rehab sports. Germany has an excellent club landscape: approximately 91,000 sports clubs with a total of around 27 million members are the ideal partners for promoting physical activity.

In order to achieve the highest degree of efficacy and sustainability of physical activity amongst the population at large, a target group orientation is just as important as the creation of adequate, quality-assured physical activity incentives. Consideration must be given to age-specific, gender-specific and social differences and needs.

Regular physical activity reduces for example the risk of

- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Type II diabetes
- Some cancers.

Further effects

- Relieving the symptoms of stress and anxiety ó Promoting children's motor functions and ability to concentrate
- Averting falls by older people, preventing and reducing osteoporosis and the risk of hip fracture in women
- Preventing back pain.

Sources: [WHO 1999] [BMG 2006]

2.3.1 Target group orientation

Target group-oriented activities are needed to promote lifelong daily physical activity. Active people should be encouraged to continue their active lifestyle. Different measures are needed for children and adolescents from those for adults or older people, different measures for girls and women than for boys and men.

Groups in the population with a very sedentary lifestyle are frequently not reached by existing offers (e.g. mass and health-promoting sport). Socially disadvantaged groups are less likely to take up existing offers (for instance the ones organized by clubs and commercial providers), in some cases because of limited financial resources. Districts and neighborhoods with a high proportion of socially disadvantaged residents often have deficits when it comes to shaping the living environment and offer few opportunities for physical activity (e.g. parks, cycle paths). Hence in these neighborhoods targeted steps must be taken to stabilize and enhance both the concrete environment and social integrative activities. Care should be taken to involve the residents and local stakeholders. At the same time joint sporting activities can promote integration. This is one of the goals of the programme „Integration through sport“ of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) that is supported by the Federal Government.

Children need areas to play in and gather experiences if they are to develop a healthy body and mind. Children and adolescents must be sought out in their individual realities and their needs must be taken into account. Safe cycling is very important for the mobility of children and adolescents and for the daily amount of physical activity required. Fashionable types of sport must be taken into account when promoting physical activity as well as the fact that the Internet, computer games and television take up a major part of leisure time. The goal is to increase the amount of time children spend on physical activity in their daily lives. But it is also about using these media more effectively to promote and motivate people to engage in physical activity. In recent years computers and play stations have developed physical games linking virtual play situations and real movement. The Federal Government will hold talks with the computer game industry in order to work towards extending and developing products that improve dietary habits and patterns of physical activity.

| Age group | Percentage of people not participating in sporting activities ¹ | | | Percentage of people not engaging in daily physical activity ² | | |
|---------------|--|--------|--------|---|--------|--------|
| | total | male | female | total | male | female |
| 16 – 29 years | 37.8 % | 25.2 % | 28.2 % | 22.4 % | 17.6 % | 19.3 % |
| 30 – 49 years | | 35.2 % | 36.1 % | | 23.1 % | 18.9 % |
| 50 – 65 years | | 40.6 % | 35.2 % | | 22.9 % | 22.4 % |
| Über 65 years | | 48.7 % | 53.0 % | | 28.0 % | 40.6 % |

Sources: ¹ Health Survey 2003, ² German Study on People not engaging in physical activity 2008

Co-operation alliance “Health Promotion for the Socially Disadvantaged”

In the alliance launched by the Federal Centre for Health Awareness (BzgA) 50 Federal Government and Länder organisations have come together from health insurance funds, doctors’ and health associations, charities, sports and science. Its Internet database provides a nationwide overview of good practice projects that promote more particularly the physical activity of people in difficult situations.

www.gesundheitliche-chancengleichheit.de

Promotion of physical activity in later life takes on increasing importance with the rise in life expectancy. The ability to move around in daily life is the essential precondition for an independent lifestyle. It helps to avoid the need for long-term care and to prevent falls and osteoporosis. Frail individuals can be assisted in achieving greater quality of life. Physical activity also has a social dimension as programmes can be attended in clubs or in senior citizen facilities. This can also help to prevent people becoming isolated in later life. This is taken up by one focus „Ageing healthily“ of the Federal Centre for Health Awareness (BzgA) as co-operation is improved particularly in the municipal area and the necessary information and materials are supplied. Another measure that is supported as a model by the Federal Government is the impact of joint activities like rambling.

In order to encourage people to engage more in physical activity and sport, general recommendations are elaborated on scale and implementation. In this context

the age-specific preconditions and needs of the various groups are taken into account.

2.3.2 Quality of offerings and providers

Quality assurance must encompass both daily physical activity and sport. In the case of daily activity it’s more about improving the quality of incentives and in the case of sporting activities about the type and scale of the offering.

When it comes to quality it is, therefore, about the improved linking of physical activity in daily life with institutionalized healthpromoting physical activities like for instance in sports clubs, fitness or wellness centres. There should be a rapprochement between qualified daily physical activity and low threshold sporting activities. Measures of this kind can ensure that inactive people gain access to institutionalized physical activity offerings and obstacles are dismantled in this field.

In agreement with the Länder, the Federal Government intends to try out centres of excellence for promoting physical activity as the focal point for co-ordination of and cooperation between existing institutions and already active stakeholders like day-care centres for children, schools, companies, senior citizen facilities, associations, evening schools and fitness centres. By 2015 centres of excellence of this kind should be available if possible throughout Germany in order to ensure and further raise the quantity and quality of daily physical activity through improved networking. Furthermore, they will provide expert support for the implementation of physical activ-

ity recommendations and action guidelines for qualified daily physical activity.

Quality standards for media offerings are also important. The dissemination of quality-assured measures that can be easily implemented in daily life for instance via books, newspapers or television programmes can help to encourage people to adopt a more active lifestyle.

Quality labels like „Sport per health“ of DOSB and those of other organisations offer important orientation. Together with the stakeholders the Federal Government will reflect on the extent to which a label for living environments that are conducive to physical activity is a suitable instrument for quality-assured design. Providers, funding agencies, trained staff and multipliers will be shown how to optimise and continually improve their work. In this context methods like audits or self assessment manuals can be useful.

2.3.3 Incentives in the living environments

Adequate incentives in the living environments are the decisive prerequisite for the promotion of physical activity in daily life. Scientific studies have shown that improving and raising the attractiveness of infrastructural physical activity opportunities and the extension of targeted physical activity programmes are effective ways of encouraging the population to adopt a more active life-style.

Being physically active doesn't just mean doing a sport. In daily life there are many opportunities for individuals to raise their level of physical activity by walking or cycling to school, to the workplace and to do the shopping. This is about creating awareness of the positive effects of physical activity like active locomotory behavior. Cycling not only promotes health but is also an environmentally friendly form of transport. It boasts far lower emissions of harmful pollutants and also keeps noise levels down.

Physical activity and health

The Federal Ministry of Health launched a campaign in May 2005 to motivate people to be more active in their daily lives. „3,000 additional steps every day“ is the recommendation which has been encouraging people in Germany since then to regularly do something for their own health. Because even 3,000 additional steps – that corresponds roughly to a 30 minute walk – have a beneficial effect on health and well-being.

Diverse activities like city walks, pedometer campaigns, women's sports action weeks and walks in nature reserves have encouraged more than 400,000 citizens to take part. Over 800 different supporters, including more than 280 cities and communities and numerous public and private institutions each contribute with their own 3,000 step campaigns to more physical activity in Germany. Whether they are public authorities, health insurance funds, schools, day-care centres for children, associations, companies or private circles of friends – they all make an important contribution to helping people discover the fun of regular health-promoting physical activity. The German Olympic Sports Confederation and the German Ramblers Association are the campaign partners.

www.die-praevention.de

The „Cycle to work“ campaign is backed by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs and jointly funded by the AOK and ADFC. It has motivated employees since 2003 to cycle to and from work in order to improve their individual health and raise the volume of cycle traffic.

A target group orientation also means creating more and above all attractive incentives for physical activity in living environments. For instance older people have special needs when it comes to designing accessible residential areas that encourage physical activity like reduced-traffic streets, safe street crossings and sufficient seats along their daily routes. Children and adolescents have their own needs which must be taken into account when shaping measures to promote daily physical activity and opportunities for sporting and physical activity. Urban development policy can make a major contribution here. Integrated sport development planning offers opportunities to complement the area of physical activity.

When it comes to infrastructure projects efforts should be made to ensure their activityfriendly design and the creation of attractive physical activity incentives. Urban development measures and public building projects should be examined for their impact on daily physical activity.

Example of the systematic promotion of physical activity: sports and playing development plan

The sports and playing development plan is a strategic urban planning instrument that focuses on the living environments of children and adolescents. It looks not only at the areas earmarked for play and physical activity but also at the entire neighborhood. The goal is to safeguard existing and create new areas for play, theme experiences and

recreation. This development plan systematically pursues several steps. Children and adolescents assess their neighborhood together with planning and pedagogical experts. The town or the local community is seen in its totality as an interlinked, potential play, themed experience and recreational space. All the locations and areas frequented by children and adolescents are taken into account, evaluated and recorded. They could be derelict pieces of land, the fringes of the neighborhood, roads, parks, house entrances or public squares. The development plan is drawn up on the basis of the overall assessment and the ideas of the children and adolescents. It contains various proposals for implementation in practice.

As soon as the sports and playing development plan has been declared binding by the local council or municipal council, the measures are gradually implemented. The individual projects are carried out together with the children and adolescents.

Frequently, minor changes already have an impact – like easily accessible, light stairwells or play-promoting elements in children’s living environments. To this end various stakeholders must be brought together and involved in planning from the very outset. This also means raising awareness for this in various policy areas. The Federal Government will endeavor to establish a dialogue with the relevant levels and areas in order to support the activity-promoting design of living environments. The Federal Government-Länder programme „Socially-minded City“ advocates more links between urban planning measures and health promotion projects. Furthermore, the topic can be introduced to a greater degree into day-care centres for children with the help of the Conference of Youth and Family Ministers or integrated more into urban planning with the backing of the Conference of Buildings Ministers. All this helps to systematically improve daily physical activity in an inter-sectoral and federal system.

The networking of various levels and areas also serves to elaborate general action guidelines which can then be individually implemented and adapted. Cross-sector alliances are promoted through the involvement of the social forces (like citizens, sports clubs, companies, pressure groups) in the design of these measures. To this end the Federal Government has introduced the support focus „Action alliances healthy lifestyles and living environments“ (2008 – 2010).

Initial measures of the National Action Plan:

- In 2008 a working group is set up to elaborate the concrete steps to promote physical activity in daily life and to support the implementation of the initial measures.
- The working group will focus, amongst other things, on drawing up recommendations for daily physical activity that reflect the specific needs of the target groups. They will be prepared by the end of 2009 and then posted on the website of the National Action Plan and elsewhere.
- The physical activity campaign „3,000 additional steps“ is developed and extended. Other target groups like children are approached.
- Pilot centres of excellence for the promotion of physical activity seeking to improve co-operation on and coordination of the promotion of physical activity are tested up to 2010. They aim to improve the links between existing schemes, different providers and good projects. The goal is to set up further centres by 2015, if possible, nationwide.
- Promoting physical activity is a cross-sectional task. Daily physical activity must be taken into account in different areas of policy like health, sports, urban development, transport and education. The design of living environments that encourage physical activity is, therefore, an ongoing concern of the Federal Government. The programme „Socially-minded City“ could serve as a model for an integrated policy approach.
- In a federal system all levels must cooperate closely. The Federal Government welcomes the support of the Länder and will seek to improve the framework conditions in living environments in a dialogue with expert conferences like, for instance, the Conference of the Ministers of Health, Consumer Protection, Agricultural, Youth and Family Affairs, Culture, Sports and Building.
- The Federal Government supports the pilot development of target group-specific concepts for the promotion of physical activity that target inactive groups. Consideration is also given to sociocultural aspects like the needs of people with a low socio-economic status or women with a migrant background. Older people are also approached separately.

- The Federal Government will launch expert talks with the business community on stepping up the development of computer games and digital offering that encourage physical activity.
- Between 2008 and 2010 the Federal Government makes funds available for the support focus „Action alliances healthy lifestyles and living environments“. This seed funding is used to set up and implement cross-sector alliances on the regional and local levels. It aims to bring about lasting changes in structures. Transferability is guaranteed through the elaboration of general action guidelines.
- The Federal Government makes budgetary funds available between 2008 and 2012 to implement the National Cycling Plan 2002 – 2012.

2.4. Action Area 4: Improving the quality of away-from-home catering

Objective: The offerings of away-from-home catering facilitate a balanced diet in daily life.

1. The offerings of away-from-home catering are tailored to the needs of the target groups.
2. The quality of the offerings of away-from-home catering is considerably improved across the board. Away-from-home caterers are qualified to meet health-promoting requirements in respect of the food they offer.
3. In principle, everyone has access to healthy alternatives in away-from-home catering.

The proportion of people who eat at least one meal per day outside their homes is steadily increasing. Already 26 % of the population eat one meal every day outside the home, 8 % more than 10 years ago. There is a diverse, attractive offering of high quality foods and good examples for balanced canteen food. Nevertheless, it is not always easy to eat healthily outside the home. The food on offer in day-care centres for children, schools and workplaces, hospitals, senior citizens' facilities but also in restaurants, motorway cafes, trains and airplanes frequently does not meet the requirements of a balanced diet that promotes health and performance.

So far there are no need-based recommendations for a healthy diet for the different living environments. Furthermore, the differing needs of the target groups children, adults and older people are scarcely taken into

account at all in canteen food. Moreover, healthy catered food often ignores the preferences and tastes of the target groups and is not, therefore, always accepted.

The direct impact of a health-promoting diet on health, on the ability to concentrate and perform is not sufficiently known to many people who take decisions on canteen food or is not consistently taking into account in the tender process or selection procedures.

Furthermore, the cultural function of away-from-home catering is frequently not considered either. Nonetheless, the offerings of away-from-home catering play a decisive role in shaping and anchoring dietary habits. Despite major efforts and successes this is still frequently ignored particularly in daycare centres for children and schools. But it is particularly important for the curricula and offerings to mutually support one another, for there to be a link between theory and practice.

FIT KID – The healthy eating campaign for day-care facilities for children

Within the framework of the campaign „FIT KID: The healthy eating campaign for day-care facilities for children“ was launched by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection and conducted by DGE in co-operation with the consumer advice centres. It helps daycare facilities for children to put together an optimum catering offering and to integrate nutrition education into their curriculum. To achieve this goal, different training courses, meetings, practical aids and information opportunities are offered that address all the responsible parties: parents, funding agencies, educators, domestic staff, food providers and health stakeholders.

www.fitkid-aktion.de

Company catering can help adults to experience daily the foundations of a healthy diet which, in turn, will make it easier for them to set their families an example.

In the case of companies that do not have their own canteen, employees must bring food with them or eat out. Health-promoting offerings for breaks offer considerable potential for the retail trade and specialized food trade that should be tapped.

Hospitals, rehabilitation centres, senior citizen and residential care facilities are particularly sensitive areas for away-from-home catering because there is normally no alternative to the food on offer and it has a direct impact

on health, well-being and quality of life. Need based food can avert undesirable deficiency symptoms and is one of the prerequisites for individuals enjoying a lengthy life and maintaining their independence for as long as possible. However, in many cases the catering situation is not satisfactory. This is because the direct association between the food on offer and health is not sufficiently well known or is ignored. Furthermore, some caterers in these areas are not sufficiently qualified.

There is a considerable need for information and awareness-raising amongst funding agencies and the operators of institutions that offer canteen food. Remediating this situation is the precondition to achieving lasting and nationwide improvements to away-from-home catering.

2.4.1 Target group orientation

Recommendations for away-from-home catering must be target group oriented. Generally speaking, a balanced catering offering will appeal to people whether they are young or old. Besides the health effects taste, enjoyment and diversity are the winning arguments.

A distinction must be made between catering in day-care centres for children and schools on the one hand and workplaces on the other. Unlike adults children are not able to take decisions for themselves or weigh up the consequences of their actions – particularly when their health is at stake. There must, therefore, be clear instructions for catered food – without, of course, ignoring taste. This is because children know very well what they like and should if possible be actively involved in the elaboration of their food plan. This will ensure that the food is well accepted.

A growing number of day-care centres for children seek to integrate organic food into their catering plan. These institutions wish to offer high quality food and also achieve the goal of sustainable nutrition education. Within the framework of the federal programme organic farming, the Federal Government supports a comprehensive, practical information offering for these institutions.

Diversity and selection are the basic preconditions for successful company catering. In addition, the message must be conveyed that a need-based diet can have both short and medium-term effects on performance as well as long-term effects on health. Both employers and employees must be convinced that a healthy diet is worth it in the truest sense of the term.

The pleasurable path to success: Job & Fit

DGE has drawn up quality standards for company catering.

- Objective: in future, company canteens should orient their food offering towards a healthy diet, inform their guests about wholesome food and support corresponding dietary habits.
- Target group: everyone who is responsible within the company for catering and needs suggestions and help when putting together a wholesome offering.
- Content: defined minimum standards specify the health-promoting foods to be used for wholesome lunch and coffee break catering. At least one nutrient rich menu (one dish/day) ensures that guests can enjoy wholesome food at lunchtime every day.
- Further foci are the supply of beverages at the workplace, statutory provisions and the use of convenience products.
- Recipe database and media: online nutrient-calculated recipes and diverse guest information (postcards, flyers, table displays) are available for download as support for the implementation of quality standards in practice.

www.jobundfit.de

Mass catering in hospitals, rehabilitation, senior citizen and residential care facilities must, of course, comply with nutritionalphysiological aspects.

2.4.2 Quality of catering and caterers

For the first time Germany is to have uniform recommendations for mass catering. The Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection has commissioned the German Nutrition Society (DGE) to draw up quality standards for away-from-home catering that reflect the different needs in the respective living environments. School meals are particularly important when it comes to the physical and mental development of children and adolescents. Children can only perform to the best of their ability if they enjoy a balanced, adequate diet. As, however, one in four children do not eat breakfast before going to school and many children do not bring any snacks with them for their breaks, there is a need for action. Hence in the autumn of 2007 the Federal Govern-

ment presented, amongst other things, quality standards for school catering that have been distributed throughout Germany free-of-charge to schools. This does not affect the competence of the Länder.

School + food = Top marks: Quality standards for school meals

DGE has elaborated quality standards for school meals that have been endorsed by the Länder.

- Objective: the quality standards are to support the introduction and implementation of a wholesome catering offering and serve as the basis for tenders and tender specifications. Checklists are used to check and safeguard quality.
- Target group: responsible persons and decision-makers for school meals like school authorities, school management, pupil and parent representatives and service providers.
- Contents: the link to nutrition education was anchored in the standards. Concrete requirements for lunch-time catering and instructions on preparing menus were elaborated. Requirements were also formulated for snacks, statutory framework conditions and staff qualifications. Pedagogical, cultural and organizational framework conditions round off the contents of the brochure.
- Internet: checklists and a wealth of further information are available online

www.schuleplusessen.de

At the beginning of 2008 the new quality standards for company canteens were presented to experts. They are now to be disseminated on a wider scale. In the autumn of 2008 quality standards for catering in day-care centres for children were published. Standards for residential senior citizen facilities and meals on wheels are to follow in 2009 as are standards for hospitals and rehabilitation centres in 2010.

The nationwide uniform quality standards for mass catering are to become the yardstick for quality improvements to away-from-home catering.

The food industry can support improvements and extensions to the catering offering by developing products. In this way it can help to ensure that more and more foods are available that are adapted to changing lifestyles.

Besides improving the catering offering, another decisive factor is the qualification of providers and staff working in mass catering. To guarantee this:

- Qualification measures are developed for the catering staff in day-care centres for children, schools and companies;
- Inter-disciplinary training courses are developed and staged for domestic staff in residential senior citizen facilities;
- Training courses are developed and conducted for meal services and providers of meals on wheels;
- A curriculum for the continuing training of mass catering staff is developed and
- Target group-specific materials on various topics are published by DGE.

2.4.3 Improving access

Within the framework of the National Action Plan the Federal Government has already made funds available to ensure that as many pupils as possible have access to high quality school meals. With the support of the Länder „network units“ are to be set up in all Länder as focal points for schools. They are to support schools in orienting their catering offering towards quality standards and providing concrete help when it comes to logistic, legal and technical questions. The network units are to ensure the widespread implementation of quality standards, provide advice on school meals and promote the networking of schools and external stakeholders. The Federal Government provides partial seed financing over a period of five years which is supplemented by the Länder. After that period the costs are borne entirely by the Länder.

In day-care centres, too, a healthy diet must be a matter of course for all children. Within the framework of the National Action Plan the setting up of network units for health promoting day-care centres for children is being examined as a result of the success with school meals. In the day-care centres for children it is particularly important to pursue a holistic approach that is based on a healthy diet, sufficient physical activity and stress management. Besides the communes the associations that fund day-care centres for children must be involved in this process, too.

It is also very important for all children in day-care centres and schools offering mass catering to have access to healthy meals irrespective of their parents' income bracket. For low income families the price of school meals is frequently an obstacle. As the reduction in the VAT levied on school meals only affords these families minor relief,

it is not a suitable instrument. It is far more important for children from low income families to receive financial support for school meals. This should not, however, lead to stigmatisation. Meal vouchers for all pupils are a good solution. Some Länder have already embarked on this path.

The Federal Government supports the Länder in their efforts to improve school catering. Besides the elaboration and free-of-charge provision of quality standards and the establishment of network units, the Federal Government will continue its school milk programme and launch a school fruit programme.

Employers must take the initiative when it comes to guaranteeing access to healthy food at work. Those employers who see high quality food as part of the company philosophy and promote a balanced diet for their employees through their catering make a direct contribution to implementing the goals of the National Action Plan. Companies that do not have their own canteen can promote healthy eating during breaks for instance through co-operation agreements with the regional food industry (bakeries, butchers etc.) and agriculture (e.g. boxes of fruit). Furthermore, they can support improved self-catering by making rooms available for breaks and offering facilities for employees to store and heat up food they have brought with them. Nutrition education courses can be proposed as part of in-company health promotion.

Furthermore, it is desirable for the food trade and restaurants to support healthy food and to offer more products that meet the requirements of a healthy and balanced diet. Initial talks have already taken place. Within the framework of the National Action Plan the Federal Government will intensify its dialogue with the food trade and restaurants in order to better tap the potential for improving away-from-home catering in these areas.

Initial measures of the National Action Plan:

- The Federal Government will disseminate the quality standards for school meals („school + food = top marks“) that have been agreed with the Länder, science and civil society.
- Network units for school meals are set up in all 16 Länder to help schools implement the quality standards. They are jointly financed by the Federal Government and Länder.

- The Federal Government will publish quality standards for day-care centres for children in the autumn.
- Quality standards for company canteens are a central component of the Job & Fit campaign. Canteens can be certified by the DGE Job & Fit. As a flanking measure to improving company catering, the „Job & Fit“ campaign offers companies information about a healthy diet at work.
- The Federal Government will test opportunities for a German programme within the framework of a pilot project in the run-up to a proposal by the European Commission for an EU-wide school fruit programme.
- With the evaluation and further development of the school milk programme, the Federal Government pursues the goal of raising acceptance for dairy products as the component of a balanced diet for children and adolescents.

2.5 Action Area 5: Fresh impetus for research

Objective: Research supplies scientifically validated foundations for improving dietary habits and patterns of physical activity in Germany.

1. Basic health research on physical activity and diet is stepped up. In particular social, psychological and physiological factors and their compounding impact on the onset of poor dietary habits, physical inactivity, overweight and related diseases have been sufficiently researched.
2. Research provides the scientific foundations for the development and implementation of user-oriented offerings in the areas of diet and physical activity.
3. The evaluation and quality assurance of primary prevention and health promotion measures are guaranteed through supporting scientific research and the provision of suitable tools.

By means of comprehensive public and, to a growing degree, private investment in health related research projects, Germany occupies a leading position internationally. However when it comes to health-promoting patterns of physical activity and dietary habits there are research gaps on the national and international levels particularly concerning basic research, quality assurance and the evaluation of preventive measures. Furthermore,

most of the health research that has been conducted so far was not sufficiently user-oriented which means that it was frequently difficult or even impossible to transfer the results to practice. The prevalence of poor dietary habits, physical inactivity, overweight and the related diseases in the population is well documented in health surveys and in the National Food Consumption Survey II (NVS II).

In future, a health monitoring system based on regular surveys will provide a wealth of information on the population's health and nutrition status. The results of the German Health Survey, the German Health Survey for Children and Adolescents, the National Food Consumption Survey and nutrition monitoring will provide important information in a continuous manner. The available health and nutrition reporting alone can, however, only contribute to the quality assurance of measures by identifying the health impact on the population. Basic research in universities, out-of-university research institutions and the business community, the implementation of application-oriented prevention research, action-related quality assurance and safeguarding sustainability all play a very important role.

Support from the Federal Government in the field of prevention research and public health research has been systematically extended in recent years. But the business community with its own research activities can also make a contribution to developing quality assured offerings in the fields of nutrition and physical activity that meet the requirements of modern life. There is still considerable development potential when it comes to the reformulation of foods. Case and individual studies can also help generate findings. In this context studies and research projects must correspond to the principles of good scientific practice (e.g. transparency of results and methodology, impartiality of the study author and disclosure of any bias) in order to achieve valid and reproducible results as the basis for action recommendations.

Furthermore, there is a need for the ongoing review and evaluation of international research and the strengthening of international research co-operation in the fields of health, nutrition and physical activity.

2.5.1 Basic research

Although there is an undisputed link between patterns of physical activity, diet and health, it is extremely complex. The various physiological, learning theoretical and psychological models or theories, which have been developed in order to explain health behaviour or which are used for these purposes, provide varying degrees of insight into patterns of physical activity and dietary habits. Up to now, sufficient findings have not been available on the factors that influence dietary habits and patterns of physical activity or on the concrete link between food or food components and their impact on the human organism. Frequently, the efficacy of corresponding prevention approaches has not been sufficiently scientifically elucidated either. The influence of diet and physical activity on the „main popular diseases“ like cardiovascular disorders, type II diabetes, joint and back disorders and obesity require further scientific investigation.

Up to now, the importance of social and psychological factors in shaping health-promoting patterns of physical activity and dietary habits has not been received sufficient attention in research in this area.

The social and psychological factors involved in the onset of eating disorders have not been adequately researched up to now either. There is a very real need for research because eating disorders are on the rise especially amongst children and adolescents.

2.5.2 User-oriented offerings in the areas of diet and physical activity

The positive effects of physical activity on health are undisputed. Nevertheless, there is a need for further research into the type, implementation, duration and intensity of particularly health-promoting physical activity for various target groups and prevention goals. There is a need for further clarification of the approaches that lead to long-term successful changes in dietary habits and patterns of physical activity that can, therefore, contribute significantly to reducing the risk of disease. Nor is enough information available about which concrete barriers and motivations for specific groups in the population influence the application and retention of health-promoting behavior. Living conditions, sociocultural background,

mobility and psychosocial influencing factors play a decisive role here. Corresponding studies are to be introduced as accompanying research in specific individual measures or in population-related studies on health-relevant forms of behavior. They can supply important information in order to tailor prevention offerings more towards specific target groups (e.g. people in certain life phases or life situations). Particular attention will be paid here to the development of interventions in living environments that are developed with the active support of the target groups. This could have a decisive impact on the success of measures of this kind.

2.5.3 Evaluation and quality assurance

In Germany there are a number of approaches to health promotion and disease prevention. Various stakeholders from the public sector and civil society are actively engaged in this area. Nevertheless, the key question is how measures of this kind can be efficiently and effectively shaped and interlinked.

The efforts so far to establish viable evaluation concepts and methods must be continued and stepped up in order to measure long-term, sustainable changes in health and promote quality development processes. The successful implementation of quality development is, however, only possible when all stakeholders are involved and research, clients and service providers work together closely. If preventive measures and programmes are to be effective they must be oriented towards the latest scientific findings both in respect of the behavior that is to be influenced, i.e. identification of intervention points as well as in the selection, implementation and evaluation of measures and programmes. Furthermore, it is important to develop the latest scientific findings in an ongoing manner and to include international research findings. Practice-based supporting scientific research plays a major pivotal role here in order to close any research gaps and make possible sustainable health effects.

Very few disease prevention and intervention programmes for eating disorders have been systematically researched up to now. Furthermore, there are major differences in the methodological quality of the research projects.

Initial measures of the National Action Plan

- In co-operation with existing databases quality assured offerings are to be systematically listed. Good practice models are publicised and their dissemination promoted.
- Building on existing support programmes or foci like disease prevention research and the obesity network of excellence of the Federal Government, open research questions and gaps are tackled. Research activities and their results in the field of nutrition, physical activity and health research must be better co-ordinated, interlinked and translated into concrete action.
- The Federal Government welcomes enhanced scientific co-operation on the European and international levels and will share its expertise.
- Only regularly and reliably recorded data can identify a real need for action and document change. Hence the ongoing health and nutrition reporting of the Federal Government is continued. Only then is it possible to monitor success.
- The Federal Government continues the Health Survey for Children and Adolescents in future. This means that reliable and comparable data will be available on improving dietary habits and patterns of physical activity.
- Research in the field of the history, treatment and prevention of eating disorders is extended and oriented towards the efficient implementation of findings. The Federal Government will stage a congress for the exchange of the latest findings at which representatives of the sciences, practical circles and politics will jointly discuss the perspectives.
- Scientific information must be viable and processed in a target group specific manner. This requires the development of efficient and effective projects for communication on diet and physical activity. Here it is particularly important to include the prevention of poor dietary habits and undernourishment. The Federal Government will support corresponding initiatives.

3. The National Action Plan – a dynamic instrument of dialogue

The National Action Plan will involve all the main stakeholders and decision-makers from the fields of politics, science, the business community and civil society in the dialogue. This process began on 9 May 2007 with the presentation of the key issues.

The elaboration of the National Action Plan has already revealed the need for a major rethinking of strategies to trigger behavioral and situational changes and for these two areas to be linked more effectively than in the past. This constitutes a national task that will have to be tackled over the course of the next few years.

The National Action Plan is an ongoing process. It describes how to bundle and improve ongoing and planned measures and provide fresh impetus. The National Action Plan is first and foremost an instrument of dialogue and is, therefore, open to further developments.

Instruments to implement and develop the National Action Plan

■ Secretariat

The two lead ministries, the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection and the Federal Ministry of Health, set up a secretariat to implement and develop the National Action Plan. The secretariat is responsible for organisation of the work structure,

ongoing monitoring of success and the operational steering of the process.

■ Work structure covering various policy areas

The instruments for the implementation and development of the National Action Plan are the existing work structures that are to accompany the process with the backing of the stakeholders: the interministerial working group of the Federal Government and the joint working group of the Federal Government, Länder and communes. Efforts will be made to establish (inter-ministerial) working groups in the Länder, too, in order to establish and process action foci on the Land level, too, in a cross-departmental and cross-policy manner.

■ National steering group

The national steering group consists of one representative of each of the lead ministries of the Federal Government, one representative of each of the Conferences of the Ministers of Health, Consumer Protection and Agriculture and one representative of the municipal umbrella associations. Furthermore, if possible, there should also be one representative of employer and employee associations, a representative of the Federal Association for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, of the Platform Diet and Physical Activity, a representative of civil society and one representa-

tive of the main specialist associations and societies. It normally meets twice a year. It is responsible for proposing contents, the networking of the relevant social stakeholders and expert advice for the secretariat.

■ Theme-based working groups

Working groups are set up to deal specifically with individual topics in the National Action Plan. This could be one entire action area or specific sub-areas. The working groups elaborate proposals on content, develop concrete measures and implement the corresponding results. As a rule their work does not extend over the entire duration of the National Action Plan but is limited in time. The secretariat elaborates, together with the steering group, proposals on the themes and on the compilation of the working groups.

■ Permanent involvement of civil society

The decisive factor here is for the desire for a national initiative to be reflected in the dialogue and brainstorming process of civil society, too. Besides the involvement of experts, civil society will also be represented in the steering group and in the working groups. Only by means of the lasting and regular involvement of all social forces can a self-sustaining initiative for a healthy diet and more physical activity be taken and maintained.

■ Quality assurance

The National Action Plan aims to achieve lasting improvements to the health situation in all phases of life by changing dietary habits and patterns of physical activity. To guarantee and monitor this, scientifically validated quality assurance and evaluation of individual projects and measures are necessary. The success of individual projects is examined on the basis of previously stipulated indicators. They are to be, used amongst other things, to identify which measures are particularly successful, have a lasting effect and which measures are cost effective. On this basis a decision is then taken about which projects are to receive long-term support and which projects are to be abandoned. The foundations for the evaluation and establishment of quality assurance standards for projects are elaborated by an independent institution up to 2010.

■ Documentation of progress

The implementation status and progress in the National Action Plan are regularly communicated to the public at large. At a kick-off congress the goals, Action Areas and next steps are widely presented and the main stakeholders from politics, associations, science, the business community and civil society are invited to attend. After that progress in the National Action Plan is documented at regular conferences and meetings and new priority areas are identified when appropriate. The Länder in particular are involved as numerous relevant activities take place on their level.

The results are presented in two interim reports (probably 2011 and 2016) and used as the basis for further steps.

The campaign launched on approval of the National Action Plan is developed further and given a new profile with the IN FORM logo. The appearance of the campaign aims to provide orientation and convey the positive messages of the National Action Plan. The decisive factor for turning the campaign into a real initiative for a healthy diet and more physical activity is the social engagement of all social stakeholders.

The website is the central communication platform. It will be the overarching instrument for networking and providing information on the Internet for projects in the field of diet and physical activity. Another goal will be to classify the many different measures, make good projects visible and facilitate new co-operation options.

■ Funding

€5 million are earmarked in the budgets of the lead federal ministries every year, initially for the period 2008 – 2010 for the implementation of the National Action Plan and the necessary instruments. Furthermore, there are the funds made available by other federal ministries, the Länder, civil society and industry through their respective activities and measures to support the National Action Plan.

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