



## NSSA's Role in the Development of Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for South Africa

The NSSA initiated the process of designing food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) for the general South African population in 1997 in partnership with the Department of Health, Directorate Nutrition, the Medical Research Council (MRC) and several other stakeholders from different United Nations' agencies and food producer organisations in South Africa (SA). This resulted in the publication of the technical papers of the first set of FBDGs in 2001 in the South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition (SAJCN). These guidelines were adopted by the Department of Health in 2002. A similar process was initiated by the NSSA for the development of FBDGs for infants and children, published in the journal Maternal and Child Nutrition in 2007. The need to revise the first set of FBDGs was identified and resulted in the publication of the technical papers of the revised FBDGs in the SAJCN in 2013.

The recognition that elderly malnutrition remains a major public health concern in SA, led to the NSSA endorsing the proposal of a group of academics and

all members of NSSA, to develop the elderly FBDGs (EFBDGs) based on the SA FBDGs. A working group was formed and followed the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization guidelines to develop EFBDGs, based on the main existing nutrition-related health issues, local dietary habits and barriers to food intake experienced by those aged 60 and above. The EFBDGs have now been developed, tested, and finalised. A paper about the testing process was published in SAJCN in 2017: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/sajcn/article/view/183778>. The technical papers for the twelve EFBDGs were published in the SAJCN as a Supplementary Special Issue during September 2021: <http://sajcn.co.za/index.php/SAJCN/issue/view/100>. A number of NSSA members were involved in the review process of the papers for the special edition.

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## News from NSSA Eastern branch

On 8 September 2021 the NSSA Eastern branch, in collaboration with Unilever, hosted a Plant-based nutrition webinar. The speakers were: Dr. Xolile Mkhize from Mangosuthu University of Technology

sharing her research on legumes, Ms Heather Harmsen, a private practicing dietitian, sharing her knowledge on the implementation of a plant-based diet, and Ms Dudu Mthuli from Unilever sharing the strides made by industry in providing healthy and flavourful plant-based products. The event was the first after the formation of the new committee for the Eastern branch. We are all excited and looking forward to more informative events!

**UNPACKING**  
**PLANT-BASED NUTRITION IN SOUTH AFRICA**  
WEBINAR  
Date: 8 September 2021 | Time: 11:00 - 13:00

**Speaker: Dr. Xolile Mkhize**  
Topic: The production & consumption of legumes for better nutrition

**Speaker: Heather Harmsen**  
Topic: Benefits of plant-based nutrition

**Speaker: Dudu Mthuli**  
Topic: Practical tips on incorporating plant-based foods in diets

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