

CHECKLIST

How to Write a Nutrition Message

Nutrition or eating pattern messages must meet the needs of the target population. Here are some criteria to use in judging an eating pattern message.

The Message:

- **is scientifically accurate, culturally appropriate, and relevant to lifestyles of the target population;**
- **uses terms familiar to the target population that are appropriate to the setting;**
For example, a supermarket message describes foods as they appear in the store-skim milk rather than fortified low-fat milk.
- **focuses on key nutrients;**
For example, it doesn't describe whole wheat or high fiber bread unless fiber is the focus.
- **is positive;**
For example, "Eat up to three servings," rather than "Avoid eating more than three servings."
- **is specific;**
For example, use "skim" or "1%" milk instead of low-fat milk. Be sure that it is consistent with nationally recognized recommendations, such as those of the American Heart Association or the National Cholesterol Education Program
- **is short-no more than 5-7 concepts.**

Note: Effective eating pattern messages include:

- Which foods to choose
- How much to eat
- How frequently to eat them
- And how to prepare them

Source: CDC Nutrition Intervention Manual