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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NEW PAPER IDENTIFIES RESEARCH NEEDS AHEAD OF FIRST-EVER FEDERAL NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN AGES 0-2

**(McLean, VA) February 16, 2016** – Looking back may point to the best way forward in the development of the first-ever dietary guidelines for infants and toddlers aged birth to 24 months. According to the authors of a newly published paper, looking at how and why transitional and vegetable feeding recommendations have evolved over time reveals a pathway to developing future feeding guidance and policy for this age group.

The open-access paper, "**Historical Overview of Transitional Feeding Recommendations and Vegetable Feeding Practices for Infants and Young Children**," was published in the January/February 2016 issue of the peer-reviewed journal ***Nutrition Today***. The paper reviews critical research and events that have led to the current framework for recommendations and policy on the appropriate feeding of infants and young children, while giving special consideration to vegetable feeding practices. The authors also identify the research gaps critical to building a solid scientific evidence base as the development of the **2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans** (DGAs) progresses. These DGAs will include for the first time recommendations for children aged 0 to 24 months old to help ensure that the path to healthy eating starts as early in life as possible.

"Poor initial acceptance of vegetables during transitional feeding may discourage parents and primary caregivers from repeatedly offering them to the child, which creates a need for guidelines and strategies that promote healthy eating and vegetable feeding success," states co-author **Ronald E. Kleinman, MD**, physician-in-chief of **Massachusetts General Hospital for Children** and Charles Wilder Professor of Pediatrics at **Harvard Medical School**. "Instead of providing parents a daily or meal-specific calorie goal for infants and toddlers, the historical evidence base shows us that the focus should be on diet quality and variety, feeding environment, and responsive feeding."

In terms of developing future recommendations, Dr. Kleinman and co-author **Frances A. Coletta, PhD, RD**, principal of Coletta Consulting, note the importance of data gleaned from the 2002 and 2008 Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study (FITS), which examined dietary patterns and nutrient consumption among infants and young children. The 2008 FITS data reinforce the low consumption of vegetables in general and the lack of vegetable variety among infants and young children. For example, a recent study using 2008 FITS data found that vegetable consumption decreased from 84 grams per day (g/d) among infants aged 6 to 11 months to 64 g/d among children aged 2 to 3 years. Consumption of orange vegetables declined after the children reached 1 year of age, whereas potato consumption increased among those aged 2 to 3 years. However, energy from potato consumption was low among this age group, contributing only 2.5% of their total energy intake. Since vegetables, including potatoes, are an important source of potassium and fiber, implementing behavior change strategies that increase daily vegetable consumption should continue to be a focus going forward.

The authors also suggest that the evidence-based model detailed in the American Academy of Pediatric's *Pediatric Nutrition Handbook* (now titled *Pediatric Nutrition*) should continue to be used when developing future recommendations for the appropriate feeding of infants and young children, including the 2020 DGAs.

The paper is an outcome of a November 2014 Baylor College of Medicine USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center invitational scientific roundtable highlighting research in children's vegetable consumption. The forum was supported by an unrestricted grant by the **Alliance for Potato Research and Education**, a non-for-profit organization dedicated to expanding and translating the latest scientific research and information on potato nutrition, consumption and affordability.

The paper is **free to read online or download** from the *Nutrition Today* website at <http://journals.lww.com/nutritiontodayonline>.

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The **Alliance for Potato Research and Education (APRE)** is a not-for-profit organization 100% dedicated to expanding and translating scientific research into evidence-based policy and education initiatives that recognize the role of all forms of the potato—a nutritious vegetable—in promoting health for all age groups. APRE is actively building the science foundation concerning the nutritional benefits of the white potato; creating partnerships with critical health professional organizations in the United States and Canada; and informing dietitians and health professionals by providing them with the latest scientific research and information on potato nutrition, consumption, and affordability. APRE is a National Strategic Partner with USDA *MyPlate* and a Produce for Better Health 2015 Champion. **For more, visit [www.apre.org](http://www.apre.org)**

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