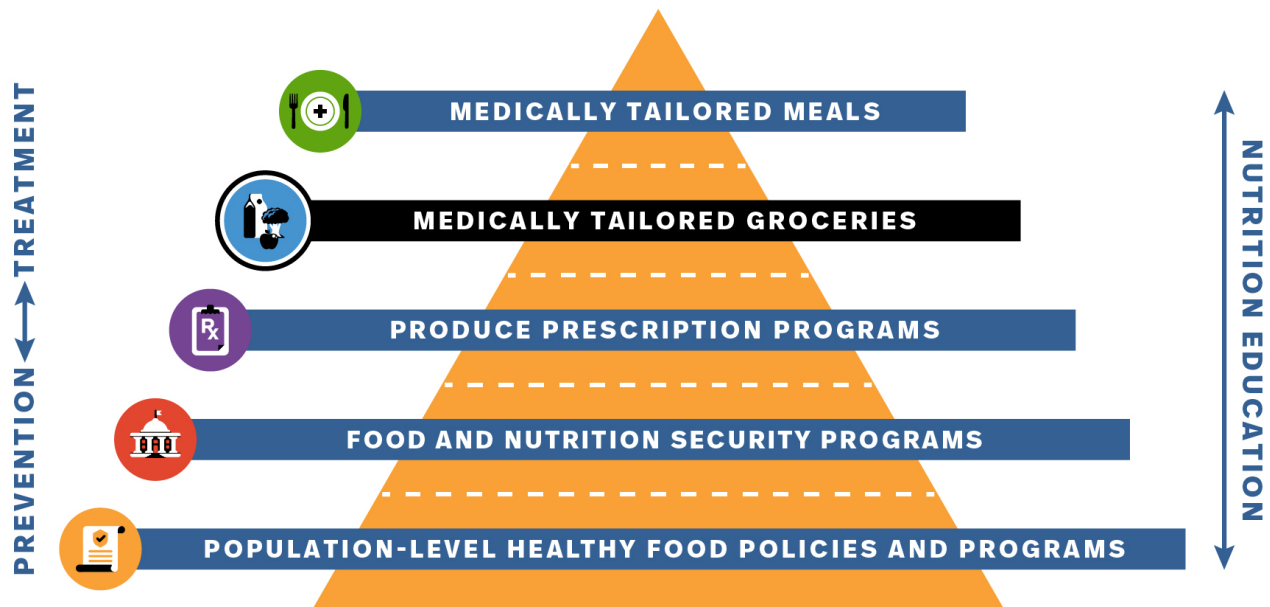


Designing Medically Tailored Grocery (MTG) Benefits

A guide for establishing an approved product list for an MTG benefit that is both comprehensive and outcomes-oriented.

What are medically tailored groceries?

MTG are healthy, curated perishable and nonperishable grocery items, assembled in a pre-packaged box or bag, that aim to treat specific diet-sensitive conditions and support health. The items generally require additional preparation before consumption. A Registered Dietitian Nutritionist or other medical professional identifies appropriate foods for inclusion in an MTG package.



Who is eligible to receive MTG?

MTG are prescribed based on specific medical needs and delivered as part of a clinical care plan. Eligibility is typically restricted to patients with diet-sensitive conditions and/or multiple chronic illnesses.

What kinds of foods are recommended for MTG programs?

It is recommended that foods included in MTG programs are supported by evidence indicating that **1)** they improve health outcomes¹ and **2)** are underconsumed by most Americans.²

¹2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. "Scientific Report of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee: Advisory Report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Secretary of Agriculture." HHS: Washington, DC, USA (2024).

²E.g., according to nationally representative dietary intake data from datasets such as the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.

Recommended Components of Medically Tailored Grocery Benefits for Treating Diabetes, by Food Category

Food Category	Recommended	Not Recommended
FRUITS	Fresh, dried, canned, packaged, or frozen	Added sugar
VEGETABLES	Fresh, dried, canned, packaged, or frozen	Added sugar or salt
NUTS, SEEDS, AND NUT BUTTERS	Nuts, seeds; peanut, nut, or seed butter	Added sugar or salt, and spreads that are not primarily nuts or seeds (e.g., sweetened hazelnut butter, cookie butter)
BEANS AND LEGUMES	Dried, canned, or frozen beans and legumes; plain tofu, plain tempeh	Added sugar, salt, or sauces high in sodium ³
PLANT OILS	Soybean, canola, sunflower, safflower, avocado, olive oil	Coconut oil, palm oil, palm kernel oil
DAIRY	Kefir; yogurt with any fat content and all types (e.g., Greek, Skyr)	Added sugar, ice cream, shakes, half and half, cream
GRAINS	Unprocessed, intact whole grains with no additives (e.g., amaranth, farro, kamut, millet, steel cut oats, wheat berries)	Refined grains, processed whole grain foods (e.g., breads, breakfast cereals)
FISH OR SEAFOOD	Canned, frozen, or fresh fish and shellfish without breading	Breaded fish, smoked or salted fish

NOTES:

- MTG programs will be most effective when foods provided are matched to the patient population(s) and health outcome(s) they aim to improve; and when they further consider what is replaced in the diet. For example, fruits and vegetables, rich in potassium and fiber, have well-established benefits for blood pressure, but fairly small and inconsistent effects on blood sugar. For conditions and outcomes related to insulin resistance or adiposity, foods abundant in unsaturated fats such as nuts, seeds, plant oils, and avocados, and fermented dairy such as yogurt and kefir, may play a more important role, especially when consumed in place of refined grains, refined starches, and added sugars. Aligning food benefit design with the disease condition and clinical outcome of interest will help FIM programs maximize their impact on health.
- Program design including education should also consider ways to ensure that provided foods improve diet quality, rather than only replacing a participant's usual food purchases. For example, an MTG debit card or digital wallet for fruits and vegetables may replace a participant's existing spend on those items, reducing financial strain but without meaningfully improving dietary quality or clinical outcomes.
- Milk, cheese, poultry, and eggs can be recommended for incorporation into a healthy diet by including them in recipes, nutrition education, and culinary education as part of the MTG program. These foods are generally not recommended, however, for inclusion in MTG packages because they are not underconsumed by most Americans and are not (except for dairy) directly linked to improved health outcomes, thus increasing implementation costs without providing a meaningful contribution to improving a patient's diet-sensitive risk factors.
- Red meat is not recommended for inclusion in MTG packages due to cost, lack of underconsumption by most Americans, and links to higher risk of colorectal cancer and diabetes.

³E.g., exceeding the threshold for eligibility of the FDA nutrient content claim "healthy" - 10% of the daily value (230 mg) per reference amount customarily consumed.