



Press release

Developing the science of nutritional status: the mission of the new Swiss Nutrition and Health Foundation, formerly the Swiss Vitamin Institute Foundation

15 december 2021. Food, a source of nutrients and micronutrients, is an essential component of our health. What do we know about our nutritional status - in other words, our body's ability to absorb and use the nutrients and micronutrients that are consumed? What are the right biological indicators or biomarkers of nutritional status? How to understand the fate of nutrients in the body and measure their peculiarities between people? How to develop a concept of precision nutrition on solid scientific bases? The new identity of the Swiss Vitamin Institute, "the Swiss Nutrition and Health Foundation (identified by its acronym SNHf)", marks the organization's evolution towards a holistic approach to nutrition: a precision nutrition. The institution has always analyzed vitamin status and will continue to do so. However, limiting nutrition issues to vitamins is reductive. It's about bringing all the pieces of the puzzle of nutrition status together to better visualize it and understand it. The goal: promote a healthy life with a diet adapted to cellular needs. SNHf's scientific expertise supports university research, governments, public health and health institutions, as well as industry. Its research topics close to people, such as vitamin D or the nutritional status of children and patients, bring information useful for the population. It also offers a certification program of the actual vitamin content of products. Focus on the mission of this independent, not-for-profit foundation of public interest as it celebrates its 90th birthday.

The Swiss Nutrition and Health Foundation (SNHf) places the health of the population at the heart of its concerns. As such, it studies and analyzes all nutrients, micronutrients and biologically active natural substances - for example plant-based - from the raw material to the product or the final formulation. "True to its heritage as an independent institution whose expertise is based on scientific evidence, SNHf continues its work on medical analysis of nutritional status. I am pleased that it is innovating and broadening its scope to establish the relationships between health and nutritional status. ", Says Roger Darioli, Chairman of the Foundation Board, physician and honorary professor at the University of Lausanne.

The science of nutritional status, what is the "just necessary" to nourish the cells?

"Meeting all cellular needs with a varied diet is a matter of common sense and mathematical logic. », Explains Serge Rezzi, Chief Executive Officer of SNHf. "Nutritional status is highly dynamic and different cell types have needs that we shall address with precision. In the current state of knowledge, sticking to the food pyramid recommended by the Swiss Nutrition Society to ensure a varied and adequate intake of nutrients and micronutrients aligned with the recommendations in force remains the most optimal solution.», he continues. For SNHf, understanding the molecular mechanisms that underpin the health effects of dietary nutrients is essential to advance nutrition. Nutrients act in complex ways at different levels of the biological organization. SNHf wants to develop, validate and deploy molecular analysis to track the fate of nutrients from food to nutritional status in the body. According to SNHf, only scientific evidence will allow precise nutrition to emerge, addressing unmet nutritional needs of population groups for example (needs of the child, senior, patient, etc.).

Spotlight on three SNHf projects close to the population: precision nutrition, vitamin D, national nutrition survey

Here are three projects as examples of the research carried out by SNHf :

- SNHf is member of the NUTRISHIELD consortium, a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program. Nutrishield aims at creating a nutrition platform for young people. The platform will include new methods and techniques, which will analyze a wide range of biomarkers related to nutrition and health.
- Looking at fishes from Swiss lakes, SNHf observed that, alike for some sea water fish, certain species from our lakes represent also a good source of vitamin D. Analyzes carried out on behalf of the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) have shown that the consumption of whitefish in particular (féra, palée or bondelle) can significantly contribute to vitamin D intakes.
- SNHf will participate in the next national nutrition survey to study the nutritional status of children and adolescents in Switzerland.

A certification program for the quality of consumer products

The “SVI” label remains. The SNHf certification provides an independent control program to certify the vitamin content of foods and vitamin-containing products (including dietary supplements, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics).

A credibility built on scientific evidence since 1931

The Swiss Vitamin Institute (SVI), now the Swiss Foundation for Nutrition and Health (SNHf), was created by the Confederation in 1931 with the mandate to survey vitamin enriched foods, as requested by the then applicable Swiss legislation. Initially linked to the University of Lausanne, SVI became a totally new and independent Foundation for public health in 1995 focusing its services on analyses (including medical analysis) and research on vitamins. In 2014, the Foundation started a process to expand its research activities and expertise in nutrition and public health. In 2021, celebrating its 90th anniversary, SVI becomes the Swiss Nutrition and Health Foundation, an independent and not-for-profit foundation. SNHf opens its scope to all nutrients, micronutrients and natural bioactives.

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Site Internet : <https://nutritionhealthfoundation.ch>