



Nutrient Reference Values for Older Infants (OI) and Young Children (YC) Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses

1. What are Nutrient Reference Values Requirements (NRVs-R)?

NRVs-R are a set of recommendations for nutritional intake based on currently available scientific data.

NRVs are established for a target group/population. They can then be used to inform specific products or product categories.

The other set of NRVs that exist are Nutrient Reference Values – Non communicable Disease (NRVs-NCD) refer to NRVs that are based on levels of nutrients associated with the reduction in the risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases not including nutrient deficiency diseases or disorders. NRVs- NCD are not in the scope of NRVs for older infants and young children's discussion at the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) and therefore are not addressed in this Q&A.

2. What age ranges do they apply to?

Age ranges are already standardised across Codex texts* for foods for older infants and young children.

- The term "older" infant means a person from the age of 6 months and not more than 12 months of age
- The term "young children" means persons from the age of more than 12 months up to the age of three years (36 months)

These age range definitions should be retained in the scope of the work establishing NRVs-R for older infants and young children.

* (Follow-on formula (CODEX STAN 156-1987); Proposed draft: Follow-on formula Formulated complementary foods (CAC/GL 8-1991); Processed cereal based foods for older infants and young children CODEX STAN 74-1981); Canned baby foods (except reference to 36 months is missing) (CODEX STAN 73-1981)).

3. What is the purpose of NRVs-R?

NRVs-R values are used for:

- Nutritional labelling, i.e. nutrient to be expressed as a % of its NRV
- Nutritional composition where not defined in specific Codex texts
- Nutritional claims, i.e. where claims are permitted by Codex or national legislation*

* Regarding claims on foods for infants and young children, the Guidelines for the Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23-1997), para 1.4, states "Nutrition and health claims shall not be permitted for foods for infants and young children except where specifically provided for in relevant Codex standards or national legislation".

4. Where can I find NRVs-R?

At Codex, NRVs-R values have been and are being established for general population older than 36 months.

These NRVs can be found in the Codex Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (CAC/GL 2-1985).

NRVs for older infants and young children have not been established yet, but are under discussion at the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU).

Considering that NRVs for older infants and young children are established for a target group irrespective of the products and product categories considered, ISDI considers that these NRVs should be included in the Codex Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (CAC/GL 2-1985). Alternatively, they could be included in the General Standard for the Labelling of and Claims for Prepackaged Foods for Special Dietary Uses (FSDU) (CODEX STAN 146-1985), as foods intended for infants and young children (i.e. below 36 months) are considered as FSDU in the Codex framework.

5. Why should NRVs-R for 6-36 months be established?

Currently, NRVs are only established within Codex texts for the general population (i.e. population older than 36 months). Establishment of NRVs for this younger population (6-36 months) would:

- Recognize that these populations have special nutrition needs
- Ensure parents and caregivers are provided with scientific based information about the nutritional content of food, enabling them to make informed nutritional choices that contribute to an overall healthful diet for their older infant / young child
- Avoid the risk of inappropriate NRVs (i.e. those for the population older than 36 months) being applied to foods for older infants and young children (6-36 months)
- Help to achieve better harmonization on nutrient declaration thus lowering barriers to trade and enhance consumer trust.

6. Which age group do they apply to?

NRVs-R are established for a target group/population. ISDI therefore supports:

- The establishment of NRVs for 2 age groups, i.e. Older infants (6-12 months) & Young Children (12-36 months).
- This is to reflect the different nutritional requirements of both age groups for growth and development due to their different physiological stages and to ensure appropriate nutritional information is provided to parents and caregivers. This is in line with the Draft General Principles for Establishing NRVs-R for Older Infants and Young Children (REF: agenda paper (CX/NFSDU 15/37/4) for discussion at CCNFSDU37):

NRVs-R should be established separately for older infants and for young children but not for a combined group. ISDI considers that NRVs-R should only have a combined value for older infants and young children only when based on scientific evidence, the reference value is the same for both ages' groups.

7. To which product categories NRVs-R should be used as reference for nutritional composition?

It is essential to emphasize that NRVs are defined for a target group/population. They can then be used to inform specific products or product categories.

In the specific case of NRVs established for 6-12 and 12-36 months, ISDI considers that these NRVs-R should apply to all products covering that age range.

For products/ products categories related purpose:

- The Guidelines on Formulated Complementary Foods for Older Infants and Young Children (CAC/GL 8-1991)
- The Standard for Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children (CODEX STAN 74-1981)
- The Standard for Canned Baby Foods (CODEX STAN 73-1981)
- The Standard for Follow-up formula (CODEX STAN 156-1987) – currently under review

8. Do NRVs-R for OI and YC influence permission for nutrition and health claims use in foods for older infants and young children?

The establishment of NRVs for OI/YC will not influence the permission for nutrition and health claims for foods for older infants and young children. Indeed, the Guidelines for the Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23-1997) does not permit their use for foods for infants and young children except when they are permitted in relevant codex Standards or in national legislation.

Where specifically provided for in relevant Codex standards or national legislation NRVs-R for older infants and young children should be used as a reference for criteria for nutrition and/or health claims. Nutrition/Health claims require that a product delivers more or less than a given amount derived from NRVs when established.

9. Relevant Nutrients

ISDI notes that:

- for the general population (>36 months), NRVs are established for protein and certain vitamins & minerals
- for older infants (6-12 months) & young children (12-36 months), this is currently under discussion at the CCNFSDU