

Challenges of implementing new food based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) in Iceland

Jóhanna Eyrún Torfadóttir, PhD

Project manager for nutrition
Directorate of Health in Iceland

Assistant Professor
**Centre of Public Health Sciences
University of Iceland**



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Embætti landlæknis



Ráðleggingar um mataræði

New FBDGs published on March 12th, 2025

Embætti Landlæknis

Ráðleggingar embættis landlæknis fyrir fullorðna og börn frá tveggja ára aldri

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Embætti Landlæknis:

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Revision of the dietary guidelines in Iceland

Food Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) first published in 1986
FBDGs have now undergone the fourth revision based on:

- ❖ NNR 2023 published in June 2023
- ❖ Work from advisory group established in 2024:
 - University of Iceland (Unit for Nutrition Research)
 - Agricultural University of Iceland
 - University of Akureyri
 - Hospital of Akureyri
 - Development Centre for Primary Healthcare
 - Icelandic Environment and Energy Agency
and Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland



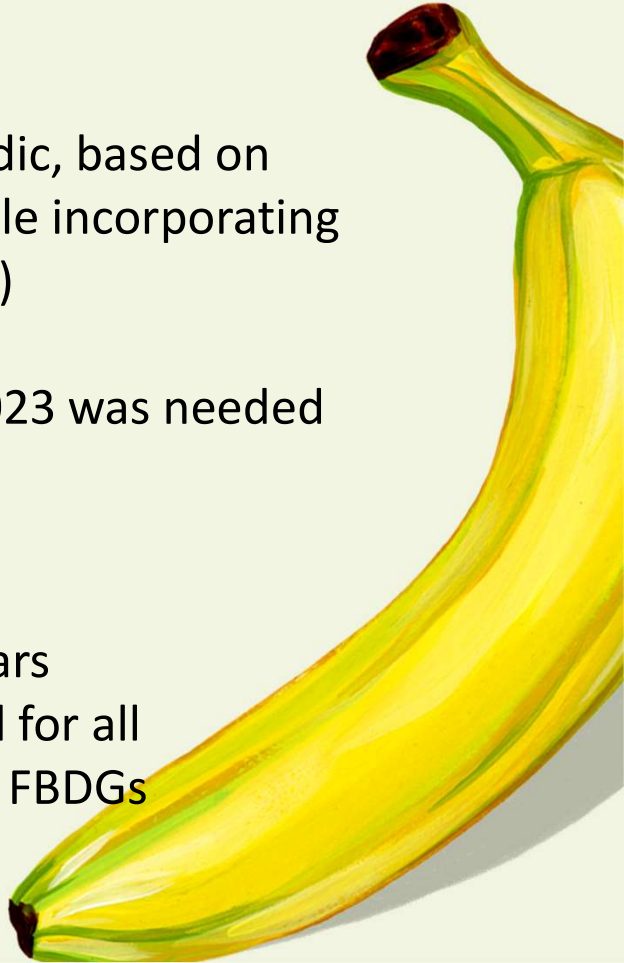


Role of the advisory group

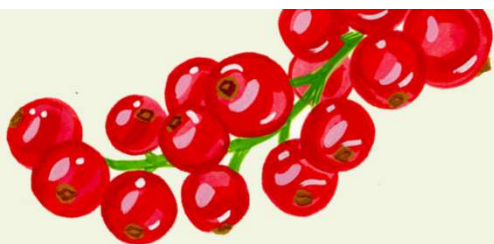
The aim of the group was to

- ❖ provide guidance on translating the FBDGs into Icelandic, based on the scientific evidence presented in the NNR 2023 while incorporating Iceland's national dietary patterns (data from 2019-21)
- ❖ Also to assess whether any deviation from the NNR 2023 was needed given the circumstances in Iceland

Which were:

- ✓ No amount per day mentioned for plant oil
 - ✓ RI for vitamin D set higher for age groups above 10 years
 - ✓ Vitamin D supplementation recommended year-round for all
 - ✓ Non-sugar-sweetened beverages were included in the FBDGs
- 





New dietary reference values (DRVs) and main messages in FBDGs

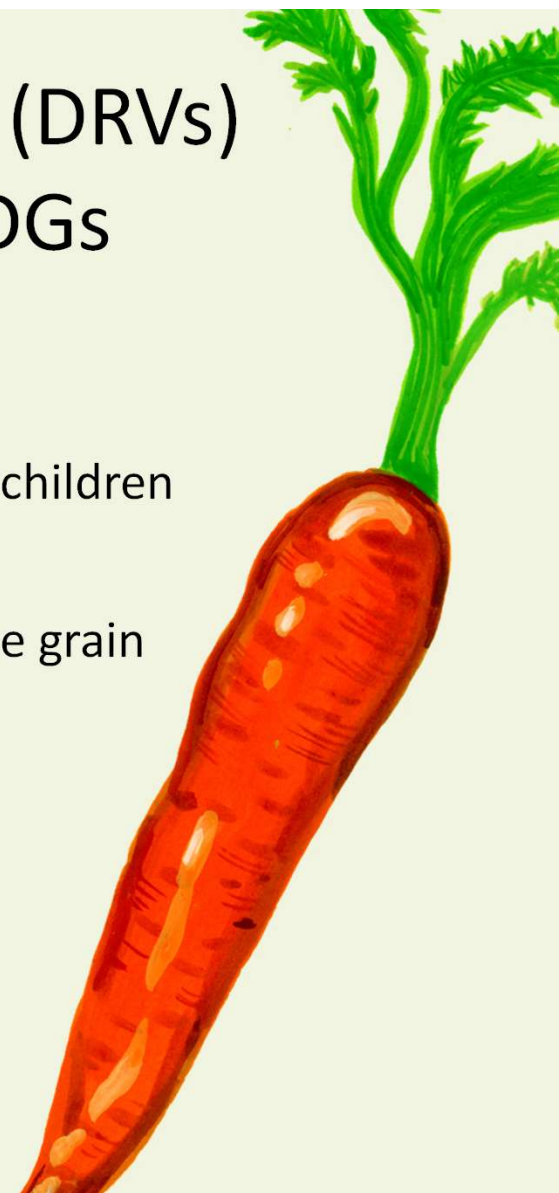
These guidelines on DRVs are primarily intended for professionals who plan menus for groups of people

The new FBDGs are intended for healthy adults and children older than 2 years of age

Even more emphasis on vegetables, fruits, and whole grain consumption than before and for the first time it is recommended to avoid alcohol in the FBDGs

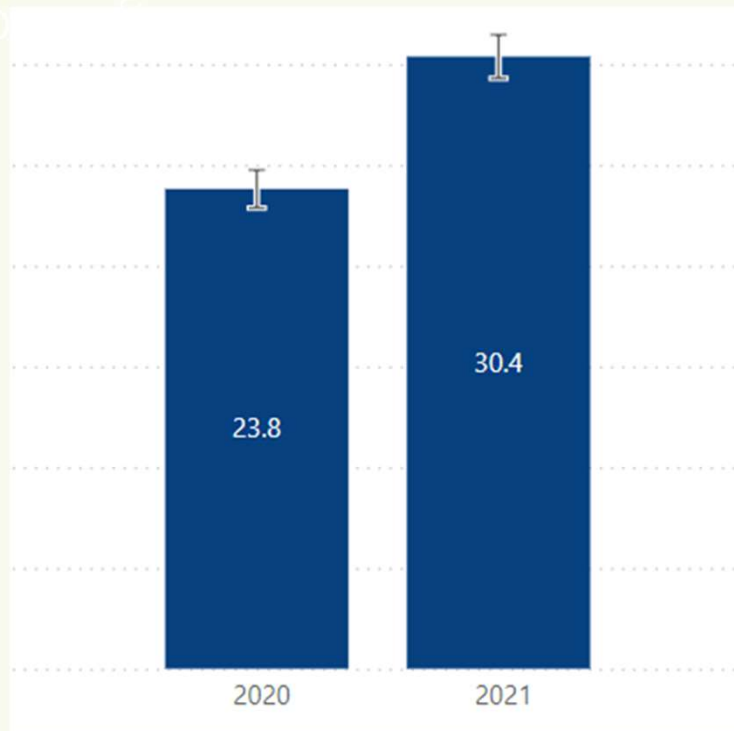
Additionally, the new guidelines include measures regarding energy drinks among the youth

The message is clear: energy drinks **are not intended** for children and young people under 18 years of age

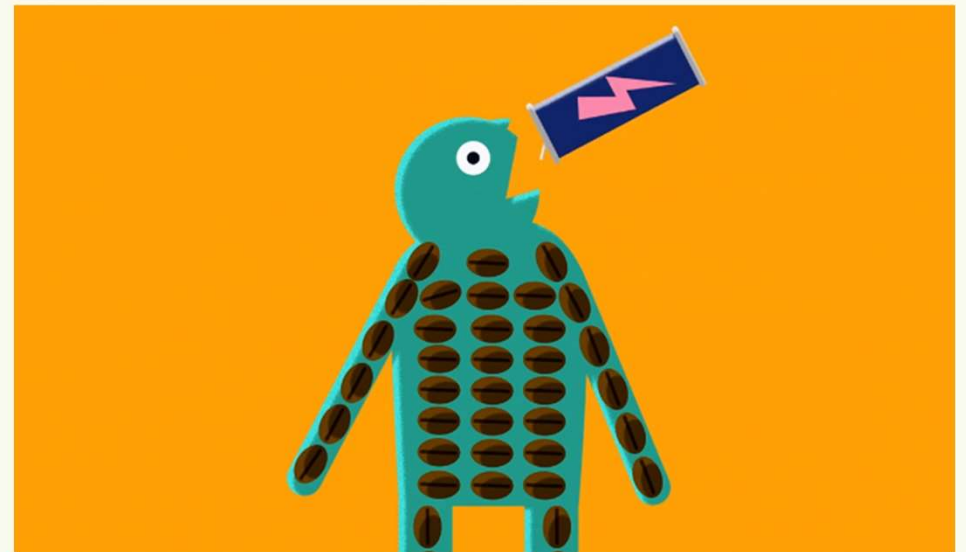











Energy drinks – 4 times per week
or more often

or more often
more often



Proportion of students in college that
drank energy drinks in 2020 and 2021



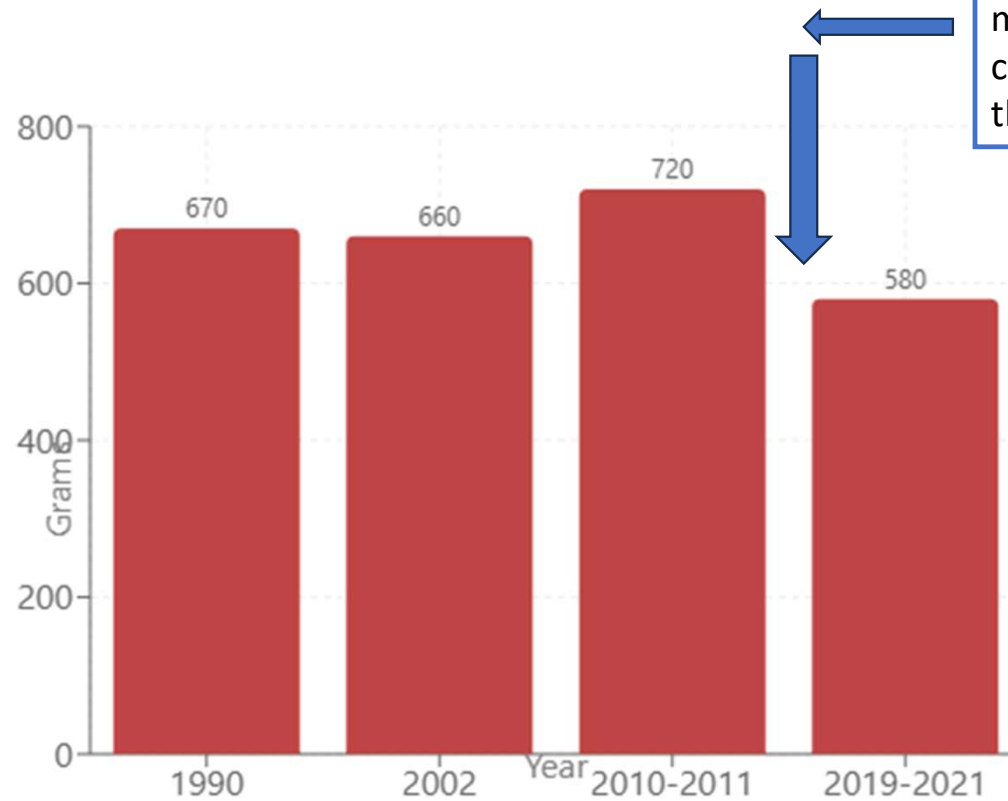
| | <u>Food based dietary guidelines</u> | <u>Following guidelines 2019-2021</u> | <u>Development from 2010-2011</u> |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | Fruit and vegetable (≥500 g/day) | 2% | Vegetable consumption remains the same, fruit consumption decreases |
|  | Whole grain at least twice a day (≥70 g/day) | 27% | Fiber consumption decreases |
|  | Fish 2-3 times a week (≥375 g/week) | 34% | Fish consumption remains the same, low in the youngest age group of women |
|  | Low fat milk without added sugar (500 g/day) | 32% | Milk consumption decreases, cheese consumption increases |
|  | Meat in moderation (≤500 g/week of red meat) | 40% | Red meat consumption decreases |
|  | Healthier fat (soft fat) (<10% E from saturated fat) | 2% | E% of saturated fat increases |
|  | Reduce salt intake (<6 g/day) | 31% | Salt consumption remains the same |
|  | Vitamin D (15 µg/day for 18-70 y, 20 µg/day for >70 y) | 48% | Vitamin D intake has increased |
|  | Reduce added sugar (<10% E from added sugar) | 80%* 66% (18-39 y) | E% from added sugar decreases, sugary soft drinks decreases |

*underestimation of sugar consumption



Red Meat Consumption Per Week

Grömm per viku - Rautt kjöt



In 2014 it was recommended to consume maximum of 500 grams red meat per week – average consumption decreased by 20% in the last 10-year period

The Directorate of Health made a contract with **Aton** to assist in the development and implementation of the **Food-Based Dietary Guidelines**

Aton's responsibilities included:

- ✓ Creating a brochure with clear and engaging guidelines
- ✓ Editing and refining the text to ensure clarity and effective messaging
- ✓ Producing illustrations and visuals for the brochure
- ✓ Designing content for social media platforms
- ✓ Creating advertisements for billboards and bus stops
- ✓ Developing a strategic communication plan to support the publication of the guidelines



<https://www.aton.is/en>

Aton searched for professionals to create the visual content of the FBDGs

We took an offer from Fanny Gentle who made hand-painted pictures for the project



Meeting with stakeholders in November 2024

- Those invited were representatives from:

The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Food, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Education and Children, the Association of Icelandic Municipalities, the Food and Veterinary Authority, the Federation of Icelandic Industries, the Farmers' Association, the Vegan Society of Iceland, Primary Healthcare Services, the Icelandic Heart Association, the Icelandic Cancer Society, SÍBS is a non-profit organization with the aim of improving the health and well-being of Icelanders, the Asthma and Allergy Association, the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland, Reykjalundur (a rehabilitation center), the Icelandic Nutrition Society, the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Iceland

Ráðleggingar um mataræði

Veljum grænmeti, ávexti
og ber oft á dag



Veljum heilkorn, helst
þrjá skammta á dag



Veljum fisk, baunir og linsur oft
en rautt kjöt — takmörkum neyslu
á unnum kjötvörum



Veljum ósætar og fituminni
mjólkurvörur daglega



Veljum fjölbreytta
og mjúka fitugjafa



Tökum D-vítamín sem
bætiefni daglega



Veljum vatn umfram
aðra drykki



Takmörkum neyslu á
sælgæti, snakki, kökum,
kexi og sætum drykkjum.



Hugum að saltinu — notum
fjölbreytt krydd





The main messages of the FBDGs



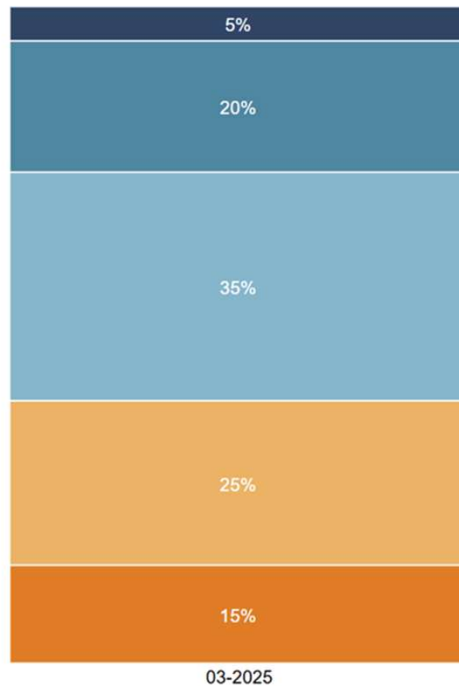
- ✓ Enjoy a varied diet with a focus on plant-based diet
- ✓ Choose vegetables, fruits and berries often a day
- ✓ Choose whole grains, preferably three portions a day
- ✓ Choose fish, beans, and lentils more often than red meat; limit the consumption of processed meat
- ✓ Choose unsweetened and low-fat dairy products daily
- ✓ Choose diverse and healthier sources of fat
- ✓ Take vitamin D daily as a supplement
- ✓ Choose water over other drinks - **children and young people should not drink energy drinks**
- ✓ Limiting the consumption of sweets, snacks, cakes, biscuits and sweet drinks
- ✓ Reduce the salt
- ✓ Avoid alcohol – no safe limits exist



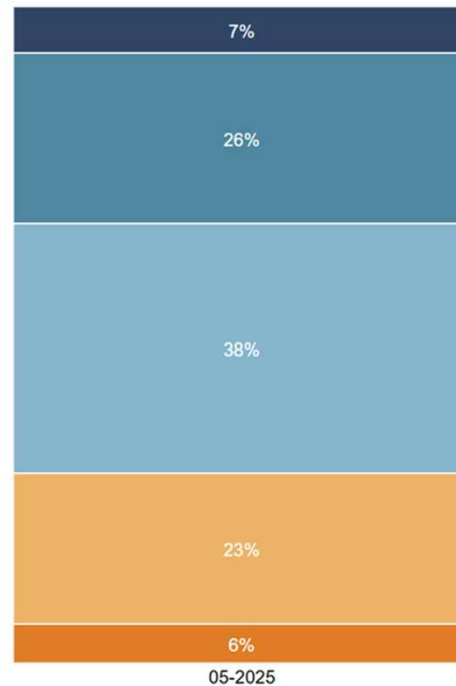
The Campaign



Knowledge about the FBDGs among the general population (randomized sample 18 years and older)



Before new publication



2 months after publication



Veljum grænmeti, ávexti
og ber oft á dag



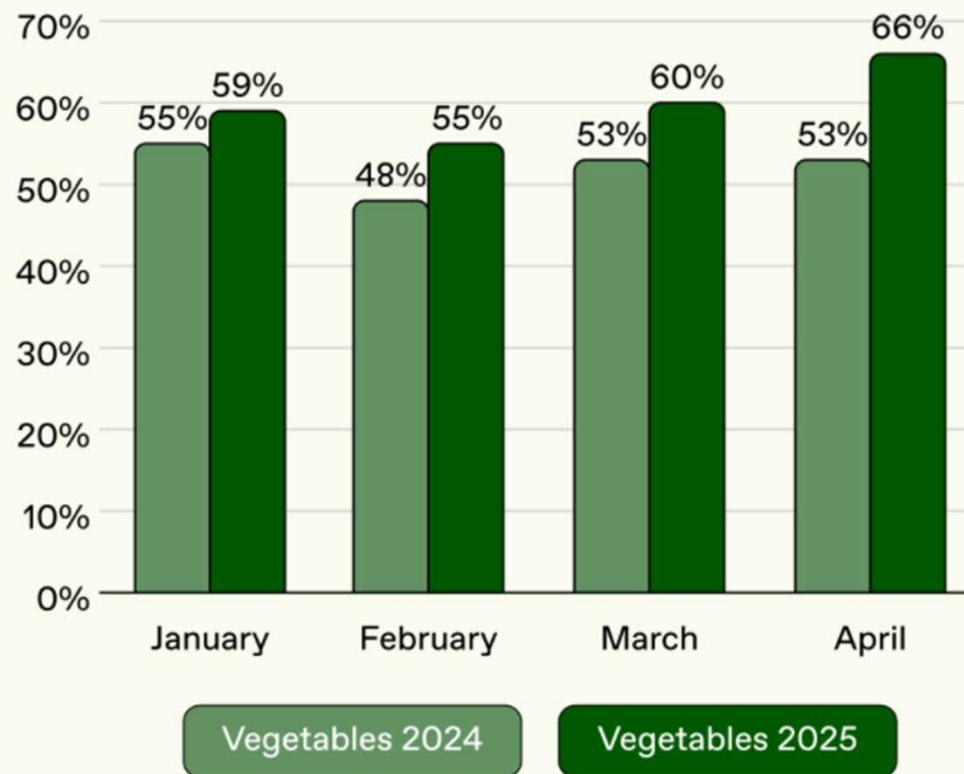
C-vítamín E-vítamín Fólat K-vítamín Kalíum Trefjar

Takmörkum neyslu
á sælgæti, snakki, kökum
og sætum drykkjum

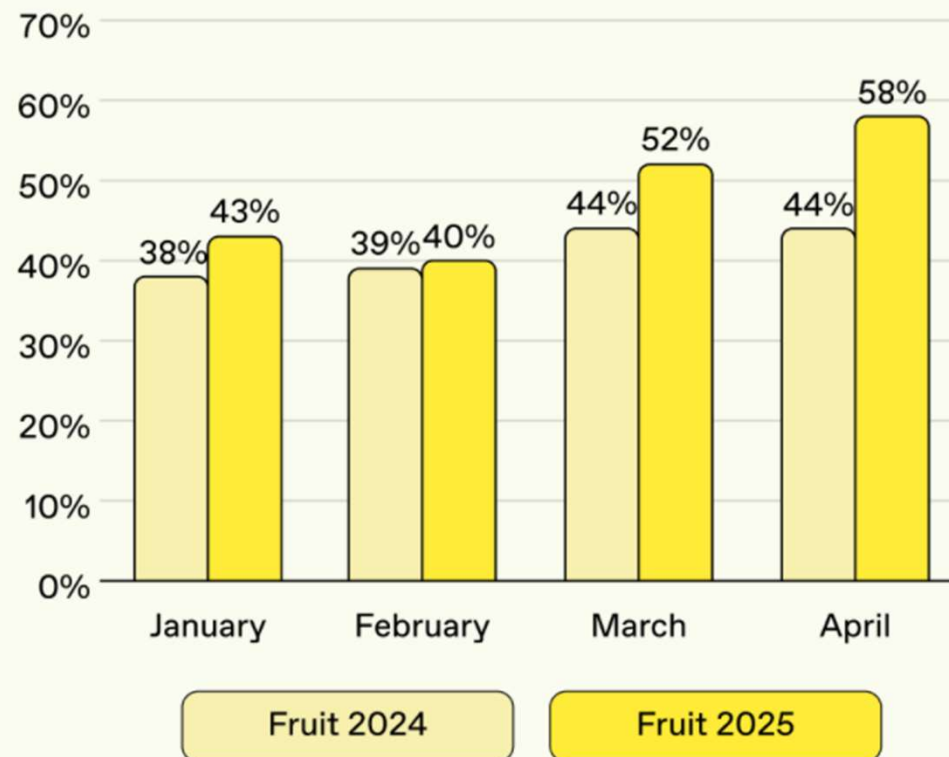


Veljum frekar

Proportion of the population that consumes vegetables once a day or more often



Proportion of the population that consumes fruits once a day or more often





Summary

- ❖ The World Health Organization recommends that authorities regularly conduct campaigns to inform the consumers about healthy diet
- ❖ Lesson learned in Iceland is that we need to communicate regularly about different topics related to nutrition and use positive messages
 - ❖ A single press release today is most probably insufficient to create meaningful impact
- ❖ In the Autumn we plan to focus on different school levels (educate for example on the food circle)
- ❖ Nordic cooperation has played a valuable role in this process of revision and implementation of the new FBDGs



Thanks



Links

<https://island.is/en/o/directorate-of-health/news/endurskodadar-radleggingar-um-mataraedi>

<https://island.is/en/food-based-dietary-recommendations>

<https://island.is/en/food-based-dietary-recommendations/published-material>

FAQ about the diet: <https://island.is/en/food-based-dietary-recommendations/q-and-a>

<https://www.instagram.com/radleggingar/>