

FAQs for the BANT Wellbeing Guidelines

10 August, 2015

1. What are BANT Wellbeing Guidelines? Are they about diet, weight loss, health?

The Wellbeing Guidelines issued by BANT are designed to be easy to understand and easy to follow pointers on a healthy diet and lifestyle. Anyone can benefit from the BANT Wellbeing Guidelines by following the “The Wellness Solution” plan but for anyone who has a specific goal such as weight loss, they can follow the guidelines for “Fight the Fat / Beat The Bloat”.

2. Who are BANT?

The British Association for Applied Nutrition and Nutritional Therapy (BANT) is the professional body for Registered Nutritional Therapists. Its primary function is to assist its members in attaining the highest standards of integrity, knowledge, competence and professional practice, in order to protect the client’s interests, nutritional therapy and the Registered Nutritional Therapist.

3. Why have BANT launched these guidelines?

There have not been any informative guidelines on diet, lifestyle and health & wellbeing since the government issued its guidelines twenty years ago. The current government guidelines are past their use-by-date. There has been much research and knowledge gained in the fields of nutrition and health and wellbeing in the last twenty years. The Wellbeing Guidelines issued by BANT take account of this knowledge and are based on up-to-date research, providing easy to understand and meaningful information for the public.

4. Why are there different sets of BANT Wellbeing Guidelines?

The BANT Wellbeing Guidelines reflect the fact that people have different goals and have different needs in order to be able to reach optimal health.

With the advance of genetic testing and the genome, we now understand how and why individuals respond differently to diet and have different nutritional needs. The BANT Wellbeing Guidelines reflect that not everyone is starting from the same position and has the same requirements. The BANT Wellbeing Guidelines take into account different circumstances and objectives.

5. How do BANT Wellbeing Guidelines differ from other nutritional advice and the other plates that I have seen?

The BANT Wellbeing Guidelines reflect the most well researched and up-to-date information available. They better reflect the way a healthy diet should be constructed by including and differentiating between different food groups. For example, they differentiate between refined and whole grains.

The BANT Wellbeing Guidelines start from the premise that everyone is different. They offer guidelines as the basis of a healthy lifestyle. However, each person has their own unique ‘food reactome’ (this is a complex interaction between the food we eat and the bacteria in our gut. Everyone will react differently depending on their gut bacteria and their tolerance to certain foods.) The BANT Wellbeing Guidelines provide information that supports a healthy lifestyle but BANT recommend consulting a Registered Nutritional Therapist for further advice.

In addition, the BANT Wellbeing Guidelines also provide information and advice on lifestyle to support a healthy diet.

6. Where can I find these guidelines? Will they be given to me by my GP?

The BANT Wellbeing Guidelines are available on the BANT Website and from BANT members. Many Registered Nutritional Therapists work in GP surgeries and your GP can refer you to a Registered Nutritional Therapist who can give more individualised advice.

7. Why 7 fruit and vegetables a day, and why 2 fruit? The government states 5 portions

The government guidelines of “5 a day” are out of date. They were designed to encourage people to eat more fruit and vegetables as most people in the UK do not currently eat 5 portions. We know that eating more vegetables is key to a healthy diet. The message on fruit is that it should be consumed in moderation to limit sugar intake. BANT therefore recommend 2 portions of fruit per day (and only 1 if the goal is weight loss). There is no limit on vegetable and salad intake, though a minimum of 5 portions is recommended. In several other countries, the government guidelines are already higher than 5.

8. Why is butter now ok? It used to be the enemy. It's confusing for the public.

Up-to-date research suggests that we need some fat in our diets. Saturated fat is not the enemy we once thought as recent reviews have shown that the original research for the saturated fat and cholesterol advice was flawed. It should not, however, be consumed in excess. Butter can be included in the diet and used sparingly.

9. What about alcohol? Isn't red wine good for us?

Yes, evidence shows that for some people a small glass of red wine per day has some health benefits. However, this is not universal and only those with the appropriate genetic profile (i.e. those that are able to metabolise alcohol and have genes that do not pre-dispose towards addiction) – should consume red wine in moderation. A genetic profile test may determine whether consuming alcohol is going to be detrimental for the individual.

10. Eat right for your genes: How do I know what my gene type is?

A genetic profile test will determine an individual's genome and provide information on whether certain foods can provide positive health benefits or be detrimental. However, there are some things that an individual may already be aware of from personal experience. For example, they may be aware of whether they can tolerate caffeine or feel they have symptoms when digesting lactose.

11. Do BANT recommend genetic testing?

A genetic test can be useful in determining an individual's nutrigenetic profile. This then enables a Registered Nutritional Therapist to provide highly individualised advice on diet.

12. Why are sleep, exercise, hydration and supplements important? Why are Registered Nutritional Therapists recommending these things?

The BANT Wellbeing Guidelines take an over-arching approach to health and include advice on sleep, exercise, hydration and supplements. Evidence and experience tells us that these are very important determinants of health, both in the short-term and long-term. The correct nutrients, together with sleep, exercise and hydration can lead to more sustainable health and wellbeing in the long term.