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**BANT calls time on counting calories over promoting food quality and nutrients.**

The time has come to recognise the folly of counting calories in favour of recognising the importance of food quality and nutrient diversity says BANT (British Association for Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine) in their new Food for your Health Campaign, launched 22nd February 2021. For too long, public health initiatives tackling obesity and chronic disease have focused on counting calories and the energetic values of foods. This misguidedly leads people to assess only one aspect of their food choices, whilst doing little to educate on the importance of fibre and nutrients. Calories can mask many nutritional shortfalls in products, and it is easier than one might think to follow a low-calorie diet which nutritionally-speaking is unbalanced or worse, unhealthy. The infinite array of products now marketed as “low-calorie”, “low-fat” or simply “healthy” are often devoid in essential nutrients and high in sugars, despite the claims on-pack. The effectiveness of calorie counting to support weight loss, and maintain a healthy weight long-term, is inconclusive. Counting calories does little to change dietary habits and mindsets and provides no education about how to make healthy choices to support health. Meanwhile the obesity epidemic worsens.

“We need to turn things on their head and encourage individuals to learn the value of eating whole food ingredients. The campaign promotes a food-first ethos and is focused on helping individuals make healthier choices, beginning with pro-actively choosing foods that provide their body with the nutrients it needs.” says Jessica Fonteneau, BANT Communications Director.

The Food for your Health campaign is the first of its kind launched by BANT, the professional body for Registered Nutritional Therapy Practitioners. It aims to bring a nutritional therapy food-first approach into people’s homes to showcase how diet and lifestyle can support health and help prevent diet-induced illness. The campaign hub at <https://bant.org.uk/food-for-your-health/> hosts a range of free resources for the public to download and learn more about how food choices can influence their health. BANT has also launched a new Eat a Rainbow guide to highlight the need to stop counting calories and instead focus on food nutrients, especially colourful plant foods and nutrient diversity. Find it [here](https://bant.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/BANT-Eat-a-RAINBOW-every-day.pdf).

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: Communications@bant.org.uk**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

The British Association for Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine (BANT) acts as a professional body for Registered Nutritional Therapy Practitioners in one-to-one clinical practice and as a self-regulator for BANT Registered Nutritionists®. BANT oversees the activities, training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of its practitioners and has a governing council, who may be non-members but whose professional experience lies in the medical, scientific or educational area of nutritional science.

BANT experts developed a set of Wellbeing Guidelines, based on the latest science and research in the field of nutrition for optimal health. The [BANT Wellbeing Guidelines](https://bant.org.uk/bant-wellbeing-guidelines/) were specifically designed to provide clear, easy to understand general information for healthy diet and lifestyle when personalised advice is not available.

**·** [THE WELLNESS SOLUTION](https://bant.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WELLNESS-SOLUTION.pdf)

· [FIGHT THE FAT / BEAT THE BLOAT (WEIGHT LOSS)](https://bant.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FIGHT-THE-FAT.pdf)

The BANT “Food for your Health” Campaign launched in February 2021 further communicates the food first ethos, embracing food and diet as the first line strategy in support of health and in prevention of diet-induced illness.

Registered Nutritional Therapists are regulated by the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) that holds an Accredited Voluntary Register (AVR) for the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA). A report by the Royal Society for Public Health and the Professional Standards Agency made a key recommendation that AVR practitioners have the authority to make direct NHS referrals, in appropriate cases, to ease the administrative burden on GP surgeries. BANT Nutrition Practitioners are the key workforce asset to harness 21st century lifestyle medicine to tackle the rising tide of stress-related fatigue, obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, dementia and other chronic diseases.

To find a BANT Nutrition Practitioner, please click [here](https://bant.org.uk/bant/jsp/practitionerSearch.faces)