



*The Global Resource  
for Nutrition Practice*

**PEN: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition®**

**Style Guide**

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## 1.0 Forward

PEN® has a series of manuals or “How-To” Guides for new and seasoned PEN users and administrators, each designed as a comprehensive reference on a specific application. Each document provides the foundation for developing a common understanding and approach that maintains the integrity, consistency and excellent standards required for the PEN® service. This guide is one in a series of guides including:

- Content Management Guide
- Cross Portal Resource Sharing Guide
- Cute Editor Style Guide
- PEN® Portal Handouts - User Guide
- Copyright Management Guide
- Glossary Management Guide
- PEN® Corporate Identity Style Guide
- PEN® Style Guide
- PEN® Standard Entry Guide
- PEN® Toolkit Writer’s Guide
- PEN® Writer’s Guide
- Portal Consumer Resource Development Guide
- Resource Distribution Fulfillment Guide
- Search Management Guide.

### What is PEN®?

Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition® [PEN] is an evidence-based decision support service developed by Dietitians of Canada (DC) and launched in the fall of 2005. Thought leaders from the dietetic profession, knowledge translation and evidence-based decision-making and technology were consulted and engaged in the conceptualization, design and implementation of PEN. Review the impressive list of contributors at <http://www.pennutrition.com/contributors.aspx>.

Designed to support busy dietitians and other health professionals to keep pace with the vast amount of food and nutrition research available, PEN® enables them to be knowledge managers through ready online access to trusted and credible practice guidance based on questions arising in everyday nutrition practice.

Recognized authorities on each topic addressed in the PEN® system, identify the relevant literature from filtered and original sources and critically appraise, grade and synthesize that literature into key practice points which answer the practice questions. Additionally, client resources and other tools that are congruent with the evidence are included in PEN® to support practice, along with backgrounds, evidence summaries and toolkits.

The PEN® database is dynamic, constantly being updated in response to new practice questions submitted by users and new evidence that directs a change in current practice. The PEN® service is available as an individual or group license or through a site license for larger groups. A customized application has also been designed to support dial-a-dietitian contact centres (CC-PEN®). PEN currently serves as the knowledge repository for three provincial dietitian contact centres (British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario; each providing support to PEN® through contractual collaborative agreements). The PEN service is now governed by a collaborative partnership comprised of the British Dietetic Association, the Dietitians Association of Australia and Dietitians of Canada. Other national dietetic associations have joined as partners including Dietitians New Zealand, the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute and The Association for Dietetics in South Africa.

## How Does Contact-Centre PEN® [CC-PEN] Differ from PEN®?

PEN® uses a powerful search engine designed to retrieve search results quickly and efficiently. This quick response is needed to support the busy practitioner and dietitians in contact centres who are working under even more limited time constraints, often with only a few minutes to identify a caller's needs and answer their questions. CC-PEN® provides access to all the regular PEN® content and tools as well as counselling tools and standardized responses for quality assurance. The PEN® database has an impressive track record, meeting over 90% of caller inquiries.

Other unique features of CC-PEN® include customization of advice according to geographical jurisdiction, branding of client materials, automated resource distribution and tracking, community referrals using geo-mapping, alert management and data collection and reports.

## Unique Views of PEN®

PEN® has three unique “views” providing access to differing tool sets based on one's security permission:

- a tool set to access the knowledge base and customize, print and email client/professional resources - applies to individual, group and site licensees
- a tool set to support CC-PEN® users - for contact centre applications
- a tool set to manage the content of the knowledge base - for administrators.

You will find out more about these unique views and how to use the customized tools in each of the User/Administrator Guides.

Supporting dietitians' professional development and providing access to evidence-based standards and tools to sustain the profession and promote sound decision-making is a consistent priority for dietetic associations around the world.

## 2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this style guide is to provide guidance to Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition [PEN]® contributors and administrators on PEN® content format, grammar and referencing. It is recognized that there are a number of correct writing styles, including format, grammar and spelling. However, to promote consistency on the PEN® website, the PEN® standard will be the style outlined in this guide. Authors should follow this guide when developing PEN® content. The key references for this guide and for the formatting, grammar and spelling questions not addressed in this guide are the [Canadian Press Stylebook](#) and the [Canadian Press Caps and Spelling](#).

### Editorial Process

Knowledge pathway submissions will be edited to conform to the PEN® style and space limitations. The editor and PEN® site administrators reserve the right to make editorial changes.

## 3.0 Writing Knowledge Pathways

Information captured in PEN® knowledge pathways is evidence-based information, based on research, best practices and/or the consensus of experts. This type of information is often presented in a research reporting style. PEN® information targets food and nutrition professionals who have a variety of research experiences. To meet the needs of the target audience, PEN® information is presented in a web-based reader-friendly style in which clear, plain language is preferred.

### Plain Language

Plain language is presenting information in the simplest way possible for the target audience. In the case of PEN®, the target audience is mainly food and nutrition professionals. It can be assumed that the majority of readers share a basic understanding of food and nutrition vocabulary and concepts, but that there is a wide variance in reader skills, knowledge and experiences in the many aspects of food and nutrition and research terminology.

## 4.0 Knowledge Pathway Format

Each knowledge pathway is divided into sections as described below. Style points are listed where appropriate. A template for formatting a knowledge pathway is located in The PEN® Writer's Guide - Appendix Ib.

### Practice Question(s)

Practice questions are organized as follows:

- key practice point(s): should be numbered with a period (1., 2., 3., etc.)
- [grade of evidence](#)  
evidence statements: each evidence statement should begin with an alphabetical bullet with a period (a., b., c., etc.)
- comments
- rationale
- references: each reference should begin with a numerical bullet with a period (1., 2., 3., etc.). Reference numbers in the evidence statements should be cited by the use of numbers within parenthesis at the end of the sentence before the period, such as (1). Do not use superscript. Multiple sequential referencing should be listed as the first and last number with a hyphen separating the two numbers, no spaces (e.g. 1-3). The order of the references in the evidence statements should correlate with the cited order of references in the reference section. See the complete description of referencing on page 9.

- key words: list all key words specific to the practice question, not the knowledge pathway, with no punctuation separating each word (e.g. infant feeding vitamin C iron). These words will help PEN® users search for relevant information on the PEN® website. See the PEN® Key Word Determination Framework in Appendix I.

Practice questions should be **bolded**.

### Summary of Recommendations and Evidence

The author is not responsible for creating the Summary of Recommendations and Evidence. It is created by a member of the PEN® Team once the new or revised knowledge pathway is finalized.

### Practice Guidance Toolkit

See the PEN® Writer's Guide - Appendix 10 for the Practice Guidance Toolkit Template.

### Background

See the PEN® Writer's Guide - Appendix 8 for the Background templates: Disease-Related or Appendix 9 for Non-Disease Related Topic.

### Related Tools and Resources

See the PEN® Writer's Guide - Section 4.11 and Appendix 18.

### Glossary

Include a source/reference for each definition. Do not use a direct quote; paraphrase as needed.

### Pathway Key Words

List all key words for the pathway with no punctuation separating each word (e.g. infant feeding vitamin C iron). The pathway key words should include only words that are applicable to the pathway and all of the questions/tools. Key words that are specific to a question or tool should only be included in the key word section of the relevant question or tool and not in the knowledge pathway key word list.

## 4.1 Font

Arial font Size 10 is the required font and size.

## 4.2 Spacing

Single spacing should be used throughout the text with the exception of spacing between sections. Double spacing should be used to separate key sections. Single spacing should be used between headings and text.

## 4.3 Headings

Headings may be used within PEN content (e.g. within evidence statements or comments, etc.) to provide additional clarity. If used, primary headings should be **bolded**. Secondary headings should be use *Italic bold* font and **bolded and underlined** should be used if a third level of headings is required.

## 4.4 Bullets

Bullets should be standardized as follows:

- first set of bullets
  - second set of bullets (within first set of bullets)

- third set of bullets (within second set of bullets).

## 4.5 Key Grammar Tips

### Apostrophes

Apostrophes are used to indicate possession. An apostrophe before an added “s” is used to indicate possession, except in the case when the word ends in “s”. In the case when the word ends in “s”, the apostrophe is added to the end of the word and an additional “s” is not added. Examples are as follows:

the dietitian’s book  
the dietitians’ books.

For the word “it”, an apostrophe should be used when “it’s” is used as a contraction of it is. When “its” is used to indicate ownership, then “its” should be used. Examples are as follows:

It’s a lovely day.  
That is its view.

### Capitalization

Capitalization should be used for:

- proper names
- proper titles when associated with names
- names of provincial or federal departments or agencies
- companies
- religions
- languages
- the start of a sentence
- brand names
- the name of a recipe
- fruit and vegetable varieties, such as Granny Smith apple. However, do not capitalize the name of fruit or vegetable where the descriptive term is part of the name (e.g. french fries, brussel sprouts)
- the first word of botanical names, such as *Taraxacum officinale* (dandelion)
- P-value - should be written as *P*.

### Comma/Semicolon Use

#### *Comma*

Commas are used to give readers clarity. Commas should be used as follows:

- In a list of items to separate the items, but not in a bulleted list. A comma is not needed in between the final two items of a list in a sentence (e.g. apples, oranges and bananas) unless it is needed to add clarity to items that are more than one or two words or to enhance the clarity of the sentence.
- A comma is needed after the word “but” only if the noun changes in a sentence.

#### *Semicolon*

A semicolon is needed in a list if there are items within a list that are grouped together, which uses commas. The semicolon should be placed between the groups of items.

### **e.g./i.e.**

The use of i.e. and e.g. can be confusing and there are several views on how best to use these abbreviations. For the use of PEN, e.g. should be used when examples are being provided and i.e. should be used to represent the words “for example” or “that is”; the latter being the proper translation for i.e.

Examples:

There are many types of cheese (e.g. cheddar, blue, cottage etc.)

One type of cheese (i.e. ricotta) is better for making lasagna.

In the examples above, e.g. in the first sentence refers to different types of cheeses - but other examples could be included. In the second example, i.e. refers to one specific type of cheese.

### **Gender**

Use the terms, female or male, instead of woman or man, unless the term is being used to describe adults only. If necessary, he or she can be used when referring to a specific person.

### **Hyphens**

Hyphens should only be used as follows:

- when the prefix ends in the same vowel as the word which follows, such as re-enter. This rule does not apply to words which are frequently used such as cooperate.
- when the main word starts with a capital, such as non-English
- certain compound adjectives, such as 40-year-old. This rule does not apply if the adverb ends with “ly”, such as completely free of gluten. As a rule of thumb, a hyphen is needed between a phrase if two nouns are describing another noun and are not separated by a comma such as wheat-free cookie.

### **Lists**

Bulleted lists that are not sentences and are introduced by a colon should have no punctuation except for a period at the end of the last list item. Capitals should not be used for the beginning word of the bullet, unless a proper name is used. Bulleted lists that are sentences should have a period at the end of each sentence and the first letter of the first word in each bullet should be capitalized.

Examples

Foods high in fat include:

- peanut butter
- nuts
- bacon.

The following tips will help you to reduce your fat intake:

- Choose low fat milk.
- Limit fried food intake.
- Limit use of margarine.

### **Measurements**

Measurements should be listed in metric. Imperial measurements can be included for clarity, but metric should be listed first. Measurements that are commonly used can be abbreviated. Examples include millilitre (mL), kilogram (kg), grams (g), milligrams (mg), pound (lb), tablespoon (Tbsp), teaspoon (tsp) and ounce (oz). Periods are not used to abbreviate measurements. Commas are not needed in between measurements of two or more elements, such as a female 165 cm 70 kg.



## Numbers

Words should be used to represent numbers from one to nine. Numbers should be used to represent numbers of 10 or more, unless the number is located at the start of the sentence. Numbers at the start of the sentence must be spelled out. A number consisting of two words, such as forty-two, should be hyphenated when written in words. A mixture of words and numbers can be used in a sentence which uses both numbers less than and greater than 10. If the numbers are part of a numerical measurement, such as grams, there is no need to spell out the numbers.

## Percentages

Percentages should be listed with a number and the symbol % such as 2%.

## Spelling

Only Canadian spelling will be used for all PEN-developed content with the exception of titles of KPs and KP-specific tool/resources that use the KP name in the tool/resource title (e.g. Background, Evidence Summary etc.).

Spelling rules pertinent to Canada include:

- Use “our” not “or” for words ending in “our” (e.g. colour, labour etc.).
- Use “e” not “ae” or “oe” for words that can use either. These words are typically medically related words such as pediatrician, esophagus and hematology.
- Use “re” not “er” in words ending in either, such as fibre.

In addition, the following words often have different spellings. The correct spelling for PEN® is below:

- breastmilk
- colour
- counselling
- cross-sectional
- decision-making
- follow up ((unless used to describe another noun (e.g. follow-up time, follow-up appointment)
- formula (plural formulas)
- labelling
- online
- post-mortem
- self-management
- side-effect
- sulphur
- tumour
- washout period

## Symbols

If a symbol is used, such as greater than or equal than, plus/minus, the symbol should be chosen from the symbol menu as opposed to creating it with keyboard symbols and the underline font.

## *P-Value*

P-value should be written as *P* (italic, capital)

## Patient/Client/Individual

For the KPPs and GRADE recommendations, individual should be used whenever possible. If client or patient needs to be used, then client is preferable. In the Evidence Statements, whatever terms the authors of the study use should be used to describe the study.

### That/Which

The word “that” is typically used the majority of the time in sentence structuring. “That” is used when the clause is essential to the sentence. “Which” is used when the clause provides reason or another idea to the sentence. The use of “which” typically requires the use of a comma.

Example:

Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide, which was revised in 2006, is the foundation for nutrition education in Canada.

The nutrition education handout that is used the most in Canada is Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide.

### Who/Whom

“Who” should be used when the related noun of the sentence is, or refers to, he, she or they. “Whom” should be used if the noun of the sentence is, or refers to, him, her or them.

Example:

The dietitian noted that the client, who had asked many questions about diabetes, is doing well.

The client talked to the dietitian whom she met last week.

## 4.6 Pathway References

Reference numbers in the evidence statements should be cited by the use of numbers within parenthesis at the end of the first sentence that refers to the material cited and should be before the period, such as (1). Do not use superscript. Multiple sequential referencing should be listed with the first and last number with a hyphen separating the two numbers, e.g. (1-3).

PEN® follows the Uniform Requirements style for references as follows:

- List all authors when six or fewer; when six or more, list only the first six and add “et al.”
- Abbreviate periodical titles according to Index Medicus. If a title does not appear in Index Medicus, provide the complete title. The Journal of The Canadian Dietetic Association is abbreviated J Can Diet Assoc and the Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research is abbreviated Can J Diet Prac Res.
- A list of journal titles and abbreviations is available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/linkout/journals/jourlists.cgi?typeid=1&type=journal&show=J&operation=Show>.
- A cited date is only needed when the content is subject to change and does not have a published copy (e.g. websites, wikis, PEN® content, etc.) and for personal communication.

If you are using reference citation software, choose ‘National Library of Medicine’ as the citation style. You will need to add the PubMed abstract link as shown in the examples below. Free reference citation software is available from: <http://www.mendeley.com/>.

### Journal Article

American Heart Association Nutrition Committee; Lichtenstein AH, Appel LJ, Brands M, Carnethon M, Daniels S, Franch HA, et al. Diet and lifestyle recommendations revision 2006: a scientific statement

from the American Heart Association Nutrition Committee. *Circulation*. 2006 Jul 4;114(1):82-96.  
Abstract available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16785338>

The preferred electronic link is to the PubMed abstract. If the web link is not available in PubMed, provide an alternative link. If the web link provided is for the abstract, state “Abstract available from:” prior to the web link. If only the citation is available, state “Citation available from:” prior to the web link. If the full article link is used, state “Available from:” prior to the web link.

### **DOI**

If DOI is provided in the PubMed abstract, include as follows:

Di Ciaula A, Wang DQ, Bonfrate L, Portincasa P. Current views on genetics and epigenetics of cholesterol gallstone disease. *Cholesterol*. 2013;2013:298421. doi: 10.1155/2013/298421. Epub 2013 Apr 14. Abstract available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23691293>

Note: some articles are published online with no pages numbers listed as in the example above.

### **Book**

Gibson RS. *Principles of nutritional assessment*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press; 2005.

### **Chapter in a Book**

Heubi J, Carlsson. Celiac Disease. In: Ekvall WS, Ekvall VK, editors. *Pediatric nutrition in chronic diseases and development disorders. Prevention, assessment and treatment*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press; 2005 p. 493-515.

### **Agency Publication**

Health Canada. *Nutrient value of some common foods*. Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada; 2008.

### **Electronic Material**

Cite dates should be added to any electronic material that is not available in a hard copy.

### **Agency Publication**

Health Canada. *Nutrient value of some common foods*. 2008. Available from: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/nutrient\\_value-valeurs\\_nutritives\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/nutrient_value-valeurs_nutritives_e.html)

Health Canada. *Food allergy labelling*. 2012 [cited 2015 Mar 1]. Available from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/allergen/index-eng.php>

### **Document/Book**

Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine. *Dietary Reference Intakes for energy, carbohydrate, fiber, fat, fatty acids, cholesterol, protein, and amino acids*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press; 2005. Available from: <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309085373/html>

### **Website Material**

#### **No Author**

Health Canada. *Folic acid*. December 2012 [cited 2015 Jan 4]. Available from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

#### **With Author**

Smith C. *Folic acid*. Health Canada [cited 2015 Jan 4]. Available from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

## MeSH

The National Center for Biotechnology Information, [U.S. National Library of Medicine](#). Cytochrome p-450. MeSH (Medical Subject Headings). [cited 2014 Nov 29]. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/68003577>

## PEN® Knowledge Pathway

If a PEN® knowledge pathway, practice question or tool/resource is referred to within another practice question or tool/resource, a link should be established at the practice point level when content is published. The wording should be as follows:

See Additional Content - Name of knowledge pathway or practice question or tool/resource, (e.g. See Additional Content: [What is the effect of nutrition supplements on improved wound healing adults with diabetic foot ulcers?](#)).

When PEN content is referenced, the following citation should be used:

Dietitians of Canada. <name / title of Knowledge Pathway / practice question / PEN tool or resource used>. In: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition [PEN]. <date the Knowledge Pathway / practice question/ PEN tool or resource used was last updated>[<insert date cited>]. Available from: <http://www.dieteticsatwork.com/PEN/index.asp?msg>. Access only by subscription.

Example:

Dietitians of Canada. Is flax seed or flax seed oil safe to take during pregnancy? In: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition [PEN]. 2013 March 17 [cited 2015 Jan 4]. Available from: <http://www.dieteticsatwork.com/PEN/index.asp>. Access only by subscription.

For other referencing situations, refer to the bibliography information from International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Uniform Requirements available at:

[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform\\_requirements.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html).

## 5.0 Appendices

### Appendix I - PEN® Key Word Determination Framework

#### Background

Key words are used within PEN® to assist both users and administrators in locating information. As the search element is integral to PEN®, it is very important that the key words accurately reflect content of the specific knowledge pathway, practice question or tool. The following guidelines are to assist authors and administrators in this process and to ensure consistency in how key words are determined and used.

#### Steps

- Each knowledge pathway will have core key words that will be used with any practice question or tool that falls under that specific knowledge pathway. Knowledge pathway core key words will be based on MeSH headings as well as recommended by the pathway author(s) and agreed upon by the PEN® team prior to the publishing of a new pathway (if possible). A record of these words will be distributed to the PEN® team by the editor and updated as needed.
- In addition, each practice question and tool/resource will be reviewed to see if other key words are needed. The following questions are suggested to guide this determination:
  - What other areas of food and nutrition are covered by this practice question or tool/resource? What are the common synonyms for these words? (e.g. heart/cardiac, obesity/overweight).
  - What other areas of health are covered by this practice question or tool/resource? What are the common synonyms for these additional words?
  - What is another common name for this type of tool/resource?
  - What are synonyms for the age or population group that is being targeted? (e.g. infant/baby; senior/older adult; teen/youth/adolescent)
  - What is the French term or what is the English term for a French tool/resource?
  - Are there other ways of spelling the key word? (e.g. Canadian, British American, Australian, New Zealand)
  - What are the short forms, acronyms or abbreviations that may not be in the title? (e.g. HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point))
  - Are there singular and plural forms of the word? (e.g. child/children)