



*The Global Resource
for Nutrition Practice*

PEN: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition[®]

Trending Topic Style Guide

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1.0 Forward

The Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition® (PEN) Team 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® Trending Topic 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.

2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this style guide is to provide specific guidance to the PEN System’s contributors and administrators on writing PEN Trending Topics. This guide should be used in conjunction with guidance on content format, grammar and referencing found in the PEN Style Guide.

Editorial Process

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

3.0 Writing Trending Topics

Trending Topics is an open-access communication tool within the PEN System with two main purposes:

- to demonstrate the value of the PEN System to potential users, with a focus on how the PEN team approaches new and emerging topics or research, and
- to demonstrate the relevance of the PEN System to current users, connecting them with additional, related PEN content.

Style

Trending Topics are designed to grab a reader's attention. They are easy to read on-the-go and easily excerpted into other communications (e.g. social media, association newsletters, etc.) As such, they are written in a narrative, conversational tone and in short, concise sections.

Trending Topics should tell a story - as if the reader is in the lunch room with colleagues, listening to them talk through a news headline or hot topic. The Trending Topic walks users through the PEN Team’s “thinking” as they evaluate an article or emerging topic.

💡 Consider PEN’s Brand Voice for Social Media

Goal: The reader comes to us feeling **overwhelmed but curious** about the topic. We help them feel **smart, confident and motivated** so that they sign in/up to the PEN System to get the additional answers and resources they are looking for to support their practice.

Our **credibility** is the foundation of who we are and it is rooted in being **well-informed, open-minded, passionate, affable and clever** professionals.

Table 1 PEN Social Media Brand Voice - Personality

Personality	How does it apply to PEN's Voice?	What to do:	What not to do:
Clever	We are bright, sharp and resourceful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write with enthusiasm Write economically: with simplicity and clarity Use an active voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be verbose and overly technical Use slang Use a passive voice
Affable	We are friendly and good natured. Just like the PEN System, we are accessible when a dietitian/user needs help and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide measured encouragement Acknowledge engagements and take them seriously Use the occasional emoji 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be overly excited or chummy. Be sarcastic or rude Use slang or excessive emojis/gifs/memes
Passionate	We find nutrition and science fascinating. Our passion is infectious and motivates others. It is a driving force behind the dietetic profession.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage curiosity and deeper learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as gatekeepers
Open-minded	We follow the evidence where it leads. We are unbiased, systematic and let the evidence speak for itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back up what we say with evidence Provide rationale or link to more information Share our findings, even if controversial Create a safe-space for discussion or dissenting views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rush to discount ideas Make people feel stupid Fail to acknowledge perceived bias
Well-informed	We are well-informed. We are connected to the brightest minds and best sources of information and we are confident in what we know <u>and</u> in what we don't know.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be transparent when we don't have an answer Acknowledge uncertainty Connect and amplify experts* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jump on the bandwagon Act like a know-it-all
<p>Our credibility is the foundation of who we are and it is rooted in being well-informed, open-minded, passionate, affable and clever professionals.</p>			

4.0 Trending Topic Format

Each Trending Topic is divided into sections as described below. Style points are listed where appropriate. A template for formatting a Trending Topic is located in Appendix I.

4.1 Headline and Preview Sentence:

- **The headline reveals the problem or question the reader might have**
 - It should be straight forward, specific and describes a recognizable “problem” that our target readers have (e.g. dietitians who are overwhelmed and want the PEN Team to help them feel smart and confident)
 - What will the reader take away from this piece.
- **The preview sentence states the solution to the headline**
 - In other words, it’s the “solution” (but not the answer) to the problem in the headline. It doesn’t give the answer but should lead me to want to read on!
 - Remember - we’re telling the story of the PEN Team as the trusted mentor or colleague.
 - What the reader will learn by reading the article
 - **Ideally it is <215 characters, including spaces.**

Headline: **Vitamin D and COVID-19 - Do the latest studies support supplementation?**
Preview Sentence: To date, research on vitamin D supplementation and COVID-19 outcomes has been limited, so the PEN Team set out to review two recent studies on vitamin D and COVID-19 to see what, if anything, has changed.

Headline: **Dairy and Breast Cancer - What’s the risk?**
Preview Sentence: A study making news headlines this week concluded that as milk intake increased, so did the risk of breast cancer (when adjusted for soy intake). What is behind this conclusion? The PEN Team looks into the evidence.

Headline: **US Report of Heavy Metals in Manufactured Infant Foods**
Preview Sentence: A U.S. report finds heavy metals in manufactured infant foods. Should we be concerned? Are heavy metals present in infant foods at unsafe levels? What should dietitians be advising parents to do? The PEN Team went looking for answers.

4.2 What’s happening?

- **This should briefly state why people are talking about this “problem”, why the PEN Team decided to write about it or the key question we had. It should also preview what the study(ies) are about in one sentence.**

Examples:

There has been lots of chatter about the SARS-COV-2 virus (the virus that causes COVID-19) and how long it stays alive on surfaces. Understanding this will help officials make recommendations on how and when we should disinfect surfaces. The PEN Team decided to look at two recent studies and some of the resulting guidance that has been published so far.

Conversations continue on social media about the potential role of vitamin D supplementation in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. The PEN Team noticed that a common rationale was that patients with COVID-19 tended to have lowered vitamin D status (25(OH)D levels). We decided to take a look at two recent studies that report this connection and determine whether the results support vitamin D supplementation to improve COVID-19 outcomes.

💡 Both 4.1 and 4.2 must be able to stand alone. Can you imagine either piece appearing in a newsletter? Does it make you want to click through to read the rest?

4.3 The research (or “The details”)

- This section should walk users through our thinking about the problem stated in the headline
 - Answer: What did the study find and why/how is it relevant to the problem in the stated headline? (provide just enough study details for the reader to follow your thought process)
 - You can break this section down into subsections (with subheaders) as pertinent to the particular TT - it will vary based on what readers need to know about a particular TT
 - Include an evidence analysis related again to the TT headline: includes key strengths and weaknesses of article/study (does the article/press releases suggest causal relationships based on observed associations? If the findings are contrary to the greater body of evidence, what does the other evidence suggest (cite PEN if possible). Is this new evidence compelling?)
 - Are there reasons for concerns with studies’ conclusions due to the research design or questionable study conduct (see [PEN risk of bias assessment tools](#)). Consider if there might be financial conflicts of interest?
 - Media and press release reports of research (and sometimes study conclusions) often over-state research findings as more conclusive and causal than the evidence supports. A PEN TT can point out when this occurs.

Example phrases:

First, we looked at an observational study by...

The study authors also observed that those with vitamin D deficiency were almost four times more likely to die (adjusted odds ratio [OR] 3.87, 95%CI 1.30 to 11.55).

When analyzing this study there are a few limitations that should be considered.

The PEN Team also noted that these results contrast with findings reported by the American Institute for Cancer Research and an overview of systematic reviews.

4.4 What this means (or “What now?”) for the reader

- This section states what practitioners should do with the information
 - It should respond to the question behind the headline
 - It could be that the article does not support a change in practice.

Example phrases

After reviewing these studies, the PEN Team is left wondering about two key questions...

Before dietitians can make recommendations on the use of...

At this point in time, dietitians should continue to...

Dietitians can talk to their clients about the difference between absolute and relative risk when reading about observational research. It’s important to look behind the headline.

Dietitians can also continue to review healthy lifestyle behaviours with clients including eating a balanced and varied diet that includes lots of vegetables, fruit and whole grain foods; engaging in regular physical activity; and avoiding smoking.

4.5 See Additional Content

- This section links to related PEN KPs, PQs, TRs etc.

4.6 References

(Please refer to the [PEN Style Guide](#) for reference formatting)

Appendix I - Trending Topic template

(Headline)

(Preview Sentence)

What's Happening?

The research/The details

What does this mean/What now?

Additional Resources

References

Appendix II - Sample Trending Topic

- Vitamin D and COVID-19: Do Latest Studies Support Supplementation?

To date, research on vitamin D supplementation and COVID-19 outcomes has been limited, so the PEN Team reviewed two recent studies on vitamin D and COVID-19 to see what, if anything, has changed.

What's Happening?

Conversations continue on social media about the potential role of vitamin D supplementation in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. The PEN Team noticed that a common rationale was that patients with COVID-19 tended to have lower vitamin D status (25(OH)D levels). We decided to take a look at two recent studies that reported this connection to determine if the results support vitamin D supplementation to improve COVID-19 outcomes.

The Research

First, we looked at an observational study by De Smet et al. that noted that patients with COVID-19 had progressively lower 25(OH)D levels with more severe COVID respiratory disease (1). The study authors also observed that those with vitamin D deficiency were almost four times more likely to die (adjusted odds ratio [OR] 3.87; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.30 to 11.55). Vitamin D deficiency was prevalent among the patients with COVID-19 infections, more so among the men (67%) than among the women (47%). These researchers adjusted for several variables that are risk factors for COVID-19 mortality (age, ethnicity, chronic lung disease, coronary artery disease/hypertension, diabetes and extent of lung damage).

From other vitamin D research, we know that the marker for vitamin D status (25(OH)D) can be lowered by infections (2). Therefore, low 25(OH)D levels may not reflect poor vitamin D status in a person with an infection. De Smet et al. were not able to determine whether what looked like a vitamin D deficiency was actually a nutritional deficiency or whether the COVID-19 infection lowered the participants 25(OH)D, making these patients appear to have a vitamin D deficiency (1). For this reason, this observational study does not provide evidence that vitamin D supplementation would be helpful for improving outcomes of a COVID-19 infection.

The second study we examined was a randomized control trial of vitamin D supplementation in people with mild symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19 infections. Rastogi et al. randomized 40 people with mild COVID-19 infections to 60,000 IU/day of vitamin D₃ or placebo for seven days (3). The researchers observed that more participants in the intervention group became COVID-19 RNA negative before day 21 compared to participants in the control arm (62.5% versus 20.8%, $P < 0.018$). Vitamin D supplementation lowered fibrinogen levels significantly but not the other inflammatory markers (SARS-CoV-2 RNA, D-dimer, procalcitonin CRP and ferritin). These researchers only reported differences in indirect markers (3) and did not report World Health Organization-recommended patient-important outcomes (patient survival and patient health care system use over the course of clinical illness)

(4). The PEN Team thinks that this trial does not answer the question of whether vitamin D supplementation improves COVID-19 outcomes.

What This Means

After reviewing these studies, the PEN Team has two key questions:

1. What is the relationship between vitamin D deficiency and COVID-19 severity?
2. What is the impact of vitamin D supplementation on patient-important outcomes, such as disease severity, hospitalization and death?

Before dietitians can make recommendations on the use of vitamin D supplementation to improve COVID-19 outcomes, randomized control trials examining the prevention of COVID-19 (including severe COVID-19) and the treatment of COVID-19 with patient-important outcomes are needed.

At this point in time, dietitians should continue to support all adults and children to meet the recommended nutrient intakes for vitamin D. See the [International Dietary Reference Guidelines Collection](#).

1. De Smet D, De Smet K, Herroelen P, Gryspeerdt S, Martens GA. Serum 25(OH)D Level on Hospital Admission Associated With COVID-19 Stage and Mortality. *Am J Clin Pathol*. 2020 Nov 25:aqaa252. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7717135/>
2. Hernández-Álvarez E, Pérez-Barríos C, Blanco-Navarro I, Pérez-Sacristán B, Donoso-Navarro E, Silvestre RA, et al. Association between 25-OH-vitamin D and C-reactive protein as a marker of inflammation and cardiovascular risk in clinical practice. *Ann Clin Biochem*. 2019 Jul;56(4):502-7. Available from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31043057/>
3. Rastogi A, Bhansali A, Khare N, Suri V, Yaddanapudi N, Sachdeva N, et al. Short term, high-dose vitamin D supplementation for COVID-19 disease: a randomised, placebo-controlled, study (SHADE study). *Postgrad Med J*. 2020 Nov 12:postgradmedj-2020-139065. Abstract available from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33184146/>
4. WHO Working Group on the Clinical Characterisation and Management of COVID-19 infection. A minimal common outcome measure set for COVID-19 clinical research. *Lancet Infect Dis*. 2020 Aug;20(8):e192-e197. Abstract available from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32539990/>

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- [Nutrition Supplement](#),
- [Vitamins & Minerals](#),
- [COVID-19](#)