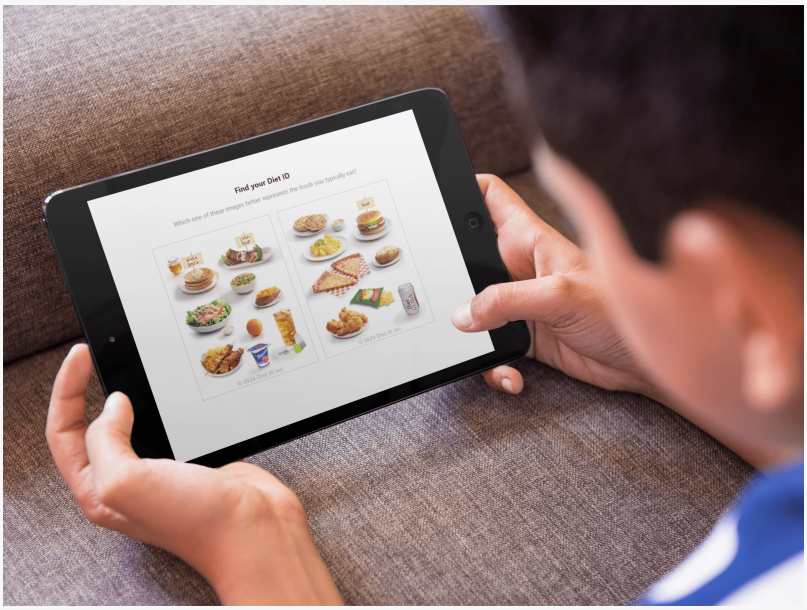
Digital Health Platform Rolls Out a Fast, Accurate Dietary Assessment for Children

Diet assessment tools designed for adults are not ideal for children. This new innovation serves pediatric populations aged 3-17.



Pediatric Diet Assessment

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, January 26, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Diet ID™, a patented advance in fast, accurate, validated dietary assessment, today announced the extension of its innovation to the pediatric population. The pattern-recognition-based method is now adapted for use by 13 to 18-year-olds, and further adapted for use by 3 to 12-year-olds, who can assess/score their diets with the help of an adult. Fast, accurate, scalable assessment of dietary intake and overall diet quality has been elusive and challenging even for adults, with further challenges applying standard methods to children. The new capabilities were announced by Diet ID's parent company, Tangelo, an award-winning food-as-medicine platform preferentially focused on underserved and food-insecure populations.

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> *Dr. David L. Katz, MD, MPH*

More than half of US children have poor quality diets, with adolescents having the worst diet quality of all age groups. In addition, key dietary disparities persist in these age groups, especially based on parental education, household food security status, and household income. For example, a 2020 study showed that 65 percent of children from households in the lowest income category had a poor diet, compared with 47 percent of children in the highest income category. (1)

Poor diet quality among children has become a significant public health concern, with far-reaching consequences that extend into adulthood. Adolescents with poor nutritional habits are

at an increased risk for a variety of chronic health conditions. For instance, diets high in processed foods and low in fruits and vegetables are linked to a higher prevalence of obesity. According to the World Health Organization, the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adolescents aged 10-19 years was over 18% in 2016, a figure that has steadily risen over the past decades (2). This rise in obesity rates correlates with increased risks of developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and certain types of cancer later in life. Additionally, poor nutrition during these formative years can affect bone health, growth, and cognitive development. The dietary patterns set during adolescence often persist into adulthood, indicating that unhealthy eating habits established early can lead to long-term health issues.

Tangelo is committed to addressing these problems by providing food benefits, nutrition education, and food-as-medicine interventions to at-risk children and their families. “We are thrilled that we now have this unique-in-the-world capability to effortlessly assess diet quality in kids so we can prescribe culturally-relevant, condition-tailored, high-quality food to both children and their families,” said Jeremy Cooley, Tangelo’s Founder and CEO.

Despite the importance of dietary intake and quality in youth, these key predictors of future health outcomes are only very rarely measured, generally in carefully controlled research settings. Traditional dietary intake assessment, predicated on recall or daily journaling, is time-consuming, tedious, requires analysis at the individual level, and in the case of recall, is prone to inaccuracies of memory. All of these liabilities are amplified with attempted use in children.

“Pattern recognition is a native human aptitude, just as the recollection of detail is a native human fallibility,” said David L. Katz, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer for Tangelo, and founder of Diet ID. “Kids, like their parents, are good at recognizing familiar patterns; kids, like their parents, find it much easier to compare images and make an either-or choice than to try to remember exactly how often they ate potato chips, and how many each time, over recent months.”

Katz notes that as the single leading predictor of risk for premature death and chronic disease, diet quality deserves to be treated as a vital sign, just like blood pressure. “Everyone should have this vital information about their health status and risk, and the earlier in life, the better; diet quality should be a cue to action in every patient’s medical record. With this new approach, that can be completed almost effortlessly in seconds to minutes, diet quality can be a vital sign, and we are on a mission to make it so.”

Diet ID’s simple, image-based assessment methodology allows adolescents to complete the assessment without difficulty or a loss of accuracy. The method utilizes pattern recognition for a quick “this or that” visual diet pattern selection, along with an age-appropriate algorithm to personalize dietary intake reporting.

Dietary goal setting is included in the experience; this allows teens to choose a healthier way of eating and supports behavior change to achieve health goals. The Diet ID Pediatric Assessment is available for all Diet ID partners at no additional cost.

1. Liu, J., Rehm, C., Onopa, J. & Mozaffarian, D. (2020). Trends in Diet Quality Among Youth in the United States, 1999-2016. JAMA, 323 (12), 1-14. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.0878
2. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight

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