

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Secretary Kennedy Announces Landmark Food Policy Reforms to Advance President Trump’s MAHA Agenda

WASHINGTON, D.C.—AUGUST 10, 2026—The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced two landmark actions to modernize federal oversight of food ingredients and establish a stronger scientific foundation for future nutrition policy. HHS proposed a rule requiring manufacturers to notify the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) when concluding that the use of a substance added to human or animal food is Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) and, alongside the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), submitted for final review the federal government’s first proposed definition of ultra-processed foods (UPFs).

“Nearly 60% of the American diet is made up of ultra-processed foods, and childhood obesity now affects more than one in five American children,” **said HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.** “We cannot reverse America’s chronic disease epidemic without transforming our food system. These historic actions bring greater transparency to what’s in our food and stronger science to federal nutrition policy. President Trump and I promised to Make America Healthy Again, and today we are turning that promise into policy.”

FDA Proposes Stronger Oversight of Food Ingredients

The FDA issued a proposed rule that would require manufacturers to notify the agency whenever they conclude that the use of a substance added to human or animal food is Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS). The proposal would modernize the GRAS framework, increase transparency, and give the FDA greater visibility into substances entering the food supply.

Since Congress established the GRAS exemption in 1958, manufacturers have been permitted to reach their own conclusions that certain substances are generally recognized as safe under the conditions of their intended use. Although the FDA has long operated voluntary notification programs, companies have not been required to notify the agency when making these determinations.

The proposed rule would modernize that framework by making GRAS notifications mandatory and expanding the public-facing inventory of submitted notices, significantly improving transparency while strengthening FDA’s ability to oversee ingredients entering the food supply.

For substances already on the market based on industry self-GRAS conclusions, the proposal would establish a time-limited streamlined submission pathway that would allow manufacturers to provide FDA with information about existing uses. This enables the agency to prioritize post-market safety evaluations while minimizing unnecessary regulatory burden.

“Americans deserve confidence that the ingredients in their food are subject to transparent, science-based oversight, and today’s actions strengthen both sides of that equation,” **said Acting FDA Commissioner Kyle Diamantas, J.D.** “By proposing mandatory GRAS notifications, we are closing critical information gaps and giving FDA greater visibility into substances entering the food supply. By advancing a proposed definition of ultra-processed foods, we seek to create a stronger foundation for future nutrition research. Together, these reforms represent a significant step toward a more transparent and modern food safety system.”

Definition of Ultra-Processed Foods

HHS and USDA submitted for final review the federal government's first proposed definition of UPFs.

Although research has linked high consumption of UPFs to preventable chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease, the absence of a standardized federal definition has limited research consistency across the federal government. The proposed definition incorporates feedback from thousands of stakeholders, including industry, consumer organizations, researchers, and members of the public.

Today's actions further implement the Trump Administration's [Make America Healthy Again Strategy Report](#) and build on recent efforts to strengthen nutrition science, improve transparency, and modernize oversight of the nation's food supply.

HHS also encourages Congress to build on these efforts through legislation that further strengthens the safety of the American food supply.

#