



**HAL**  
open science

## Impact of dietary guidelines on lifetime exposure to chemical contaminants: Divergent conclusions for two bioaccumulative substances

Manon Pruvost-Couvreur, Bruno Le Bizec, Irène Margaritis, Jean-Luc J.L. Volatier, Camille Béchaux, Gilles Rivière

### ► To cite this version:

Manon Pruvost-Couvreur, Bruno Le Bizec, Irène Margaritis, Jean-Luc J.L. Volatier, Camille Béchaux, et al.. Impact of dietary guidelines on lifetime exposure to chemical contaminants: Divergent conclusions for two bioaccumulative substances. *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, 2020, 145, pp.111672. 10.1016/j.fct.2020.111672 . hal-03182964

**HAL Id: hal-03182964**

**<https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-03182964>**

Submitted on 21 Sep 2022

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial 4.0 International License

1 Impact of dietary guidelines on lifetime exposure to  
2 chemical contaminants: divergent conclusions for two  
3 bioaccumulative substances

4

5 Manon Pruvost-Couvreur<sup>a,b</sup>, Bruno Le Bizec<sup>a</sup>, Irène Margaritis<sup>b</sup>, Jean-Luc Volatier<sup>b</sup>, Camille Béchaux<sup>b</sup>  
6 and Gilles Rivière<sup>b</sup>

7

8 <sup>a</sup>Laboratoire d'Etude des Résidus et Contaminants dans les Aliments (LABERCA), INRAE, Oniris,  
9 Nantes F-44307, France

10 <sup>b</sup>Risk Assessment Department - French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and  
11 Safety, 14 Rue Pierre et Marie Curie, F-94700 Maisons-Alfort, France

12

13 Corresponding author:

14 Gilles RIVIERE

15 Gilles.riviere@anses.fr

16 Tel : ++ 33 (0)1 49 77 27 94

Abbreviations: ANSES (French agency for food, environmental and occupational health & safety), FBDG (Food Based Dietary Guideline), FNHP (French Nutrition Health Program), HBGV (Health Based Guidance Value), INCA2 (name of the French individual and national study on food consumption 2006-2007), iTDS (French infant Total Diet Study), Nutri-Baby SFAE 2005 (name of the study on food behaviours and consumption in French children between 0 and 35 months of age), PBTK (Physiologically Based Toxicokinetic), PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), PI (Prediction Interval), TDS2 (French second Total Diet Study), TDSs (Total Diet Studies)

## 17 Abstract

18 Food based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) are developed to promote appropriate nutrients intake.  
19 However, FBDGs may trigger higher exposure to some food chemical contaminants while  
20 recommending the consumption of specific food groups that are more contaminated than others. In  
21 some cases, the balance between benefits and risks is difficult to achieve.

22 In the present article, we describe the long-term impact of some FBDGs on the exposure to food  
23 contaminants. Two examples of bioaccumulative substances were studied: cadmium and PCBs.  
24 Lifetime dietary exposure trajectories were simulated for two populations: the first representing the  
25 general French population, the second generated using virtual individuals following national FBDGs  
26 during their entire life. Exposure trajectories were converted into lifetime cadmium and PCB internal  
27 concentrations by using physiologically based toxicokinetic models. Finally, trajectories were  
28 compared with reference values to assess the health risk related to cadmium and PCBs, for both  
29 simulated populations.

30 This work highlights that FBDGs may have a major impact on PCB dietary exposures and lead to  
31 significantly higher PCB plasma concentrations than those observed in the general population. On  
32 the contrary, cadmium exposure is only slightly impacted when FBDGs are followed. This underscores  
33 the relevance of taking into account lifetime exposures when establishing FBDGs.

## 34 Keywords

35 Food based dietary guidelines, long-term exposure, PBTK, cadmium, PCB, TDS, HBGV

## 36 1. Introduction

37 Consumption of certain food groups may limit or increase the risk of chronic diseases for consumers,  
38 such as obesity, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes or cancers (Schulze et al. 2018; WHO/FAO  
39 2003). So, healthy and balanced diet is crucial to non-communicable diseases prevention.

40 Food based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) “are intended to establish a basis for public food and  
41 nutrition, health and agricultural policies and nutrition education programmes to foster healthy  
42 eating habits and lifestyles. They provide advice on foods, food groups and dietary patterns to  
43 provide the required nutrients to the general public to promote overall health and prevent chronic  
44 diseases.” (FAO 2020).

45 In France, the FNHP (French Nutrition Health Program), a government plan implemented in 2001,  
46 aims to improve the health of the population through better food composition and consumptions  
47 and physical activity practices (Herberg et al. 2008). The FNHP is mentioned in the Public Health  
48 Code since 2010 and has various missions of prevention and dissemination of recommendations on  
49 dietary practices and physical activity (Public Health Code 2010).

50 Although the FNPH provides FBDGs intended to cover weekly nutritional needs of the population,  
51 these recommendations may induce consequences on population exposure to chemical  
52 contaminants. In 2016, the French agency for food, environmental and occupational health & safety  
53 (ANSES) highlighted the difficulty to derive FBDGs covering nutritional needs while exposing to doses  
54 of contaminants below safe levels, in particular for acrylamide, inorganic arsenic and lead (ANSES  
55 2016a). Maximum levels of contaminants in food are set by EU regulation 1881/2006 for a large set  
56 of chemical contaminants and their main food contributors to dietary exposure, however, this  
57 regulation is based on actual food intake in Europe and not FBDGs (Commission of the European  
58 communities 2006).

59 In the present article, we illustrate differences of lifetime exposures to contaminants between a  
60 general population and a sub-population following the FBDGs provided by the FNHP. The aim was to  
61 evaluate the long-term impact of FBDGs on exposures but also on body burden of chemicals,  
62 especially in the case of substances known to accumulate in the human body. To this end, exposures  
63 of a general population were compared with those of a population of individuals following the FBDGs  
64 of the FNPH during their entire life.

65 The method was applied to the examples of two chemical substances: cadmium, which is a  
66 ubiquitous heavy metal and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), persistent organic pollutants including  
67 209 congeners.

68 For non-smoking individuals, food is the main source of exposure to cadmium and PCBs (EFSA 2005,  
69 2009). In France, bread and dried bread products, as well as potatoes and potato products are the  
70 foods contributing the most to cadmium dietary exposure, for children and adults. Fish and dairy  
71 products are the foods contributing the most to PCB dietary exposure (ANSES 2011).

72 To model the bioaccumulation of cadmium and PCBs, we simulated lifetime body burdens of the  
73 general population and individuals following the FBDGs during their entire life, using physiologically  
74 based toxicokinetic (PBTK) models.

75 Simulated exposures and body burdens were then compared to reference values in order to assess  
76 the health risk related to modelled lifetime trajectories.

77

## 78 2. Material and methods

### 79 2.1. Consumption and exposure data

80 In this work, consumption data are those from the cross-sectional individual dietary survey in  
81 children under 3 years conducted by the Syndicat Français des Aliments de l'Enfance (SFAE) et de la

82 Nutrition Clinique (Fantino and Gourmet 2008) and from the second individual and national dietary  
83 survey INCA2 for the rest of the population (AFSSA 2009). The SFAE survey recorded the  
84 consumption of 705 non-breast-fed children in France in 2005 during three consecutive days. The  
85 INCA2 survey recorded the consumption of 1455 children over the age of 3 and 2624 adults in 2006-  
86 2007 in France during one week.

87 Cadmium and PCB exposures associated with intakes recorded in the SFAE and INCA2 surveys were  
88 estimated in the French infant Total Diet Study (iTDS) for children under the age of 3 and the French  
89 second Total Diet Study (TDS2) for individuals between 3 and 79 years old, respectively (ANSES 2011,  
90 2016b). As part of these total diet studies (TDSs), concentrations of more than 400 substances were  
91 measured in samples of commonly eaten foods, cooked as consumed. Next, the mean dietary  
92 exposures for the duration of the survey were assessed for each individual of the SFAE and INCA2  
93 surveys.

94 In the TDS2, only 52% of the consumption of fish of the French population was covered by sampling  
95 even though fish and seafood are the largest contributors to PCB dietary exposure. Therefore, an  
96 additional exposure scenario was performed in the TDS2 to take into account the consumption of not  
97 sampled fishes, by imputing the contamination of sampled fishes to not sampled ones based on their  
98 lipid content and their metabolism (Sirot et al. 2012b).

99

## 100 2.2. Food based dietary guidelines

101 Before the age of 3, the main FBDG is to exclusively breastfeed until the age of 6 months. Then  
102 breastfeeding may be prolonged in addition to the gradual diversification of the diet (ANSES 2019;  
103 INPES 2015; WHO 2017). Otherwise, until 6 months of age, the diet should be exclusively composed  
104 of infant formula specific to children under the age of 6 months. Then, the diet should be  
105 progressively diversified and supplemented with infant formula dedicated to children over the age of  
106 7 months. In any case, cow milk must not be introduced into the diet before at least the age of 1

107 year. In the present study, since we do not have information on the consumption of breast milk or on  
108 concentrations of cadmium and PCBs in breast milk, FBDGs covering infant formula were considered.

109 From the beginning of the diversification of the diet, quantifiable FBDGs cover consumption of milk,  
110 dairy products, meat, fish and eggs, according to age:

- 111 - 7-8 months old: at least 500 mL of infant formula per day and 10 g of meat, fish or egg per  
112 day,
- 113 - 9-12 months old: at least 500 mL of infant formula per day and 20 g of meat, fish or egg per  
114 day,
- 115 - 13-36 months old: less than 800 mL of milk or dairy products per day and 30 g of meat, fish  
116 or egg per day (INPES 2015).

117 For children over the age of 3, the FBDGs proposed by the French agency for food safety (AFSSA)  
118 were:

- 119 - 5 portions of fruits and vegetables per day,
- 120 - Cereal products at each meal,
- 121 - 3 or 4 portions of dairy meal products to have an adequate daily calcium intake,
- 122 - 1 or 2 portions of meat, egg or fish per day, with size of portions evolving with age,
- 123 - 2 portions of fish per week (INPES 2015).

124 For adults, the quantitative studied FBDGs were:

- 125 - At least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables per day,
- 126 - A least 2 portions of legumes per week,
- 127 - Wholegrain and unrefined cereal products every day,
- 128 - 2 portions of dairy products per day,
- 129 - 2 portions of fish and seafood per week, including one oily fish,
- 130 - Maximum 500 g of red meat per week,

131 - Maximum 150 g of processed meat per week (HCPH 2017).

132 As there are many FBDGs for children and adults, people following all guidelines are scarce. Since the  
133 aim of this work was to estimate the long-term impact of FBDGs on exposure, exposure trajectories  
134 were simulated for individuals following the guidelines for foods that appear to be the most  
135 significant contributors to dietary exposures. To this end, food groups recorded in the SFAE and the  
136 INCA2 surveys, and being subject to at least one FBDG, were identified. Then, contributions of these  
137 food groups to exposure to the chemical of interest were assessed. Consequently, selected FBDGs  
138 were not the same according to the studied chemical.

139

### 140 2.3. Simulation of lifetime exposure trajectories

141 First, a general virtual population was simulated. To this end, exposures estimated in the TDSs were  
142 grouped by age. Age groups were defined to correspond to specific dietary habits and social  
143 behaviours. Then, a statistical distribution was fitted to exposures for each age group, using the  
144 function *fitdist* of the *fitdistrplus* package (Delignette-Muller et al. 2019) in R version 3.6.1.

145 The trajectory of a virtual individual was computed by randomly drawing a weekly exposure in the  
146 distribution of the corresponding age group, for every week of life, from birth to the age of 80. The  
147 process was iterated to simulate a population of 10 000 individuals.

148 A sub-population of individuals following the FBDGs during their entire life was similarly simulated.  
149 Individuals following the FBDGs selected for the studied chemical were identified in the TDSs.  
150 Distributions were fitted to exposures of these individuals, by age group. Then, lifetime exposure  
151 trajectories were simulated by randomly drawing exposures in the corresponding distribution, for  
152 every week of life.

153 This method does not simulate realistic lifetime individual profiles. In fact, since the follow-up of  
154 FBDGs, like food consumption behaviours in general, is correlated with certain sociodemographic



155 and economic characteristics, it may change over time. However, the method proposed here allows  
156 the assessment of the mean impact of following the FBDGs in a life-long framework, *i.e.* in the  
157 context of a theoretical scenario that assumes a lifetime follow-up of the FBDGs.

158

## 159 2.4. Simulation of lifetime body burden trajectories

160 In order to estimate the impact of FBDGs on the accumulation of chemicals in the body, body burden  
161 trajectories were simulated from dietary exposure trajectories. To this end, previously developed  
162 physiologically based toxicokinetic (PBTK) models were used. The PBTK model for cadmium was that  
163 from the study of Kjellström and Nordberg (1978) and included several modifications described by  
164 Pruvost-Couvreur et al. (2020a). This model allowed simulating trajectories of cadmium urinary  
165 concentrations, adjusted to creatinine, from cadmium exposure trajectories. The PBTK model used  
166 for PCBs was described by Pruvost-Couvreur et al. (2020b) and allowed the computation of  
167 trajectories of PCB plasma concentrations, adjusted to lipid weight, from PCB dietary exposure  
168 trajectories. Both models accounted for evolution of physiological parameters with age.

169

## 170 3. Results and discussion

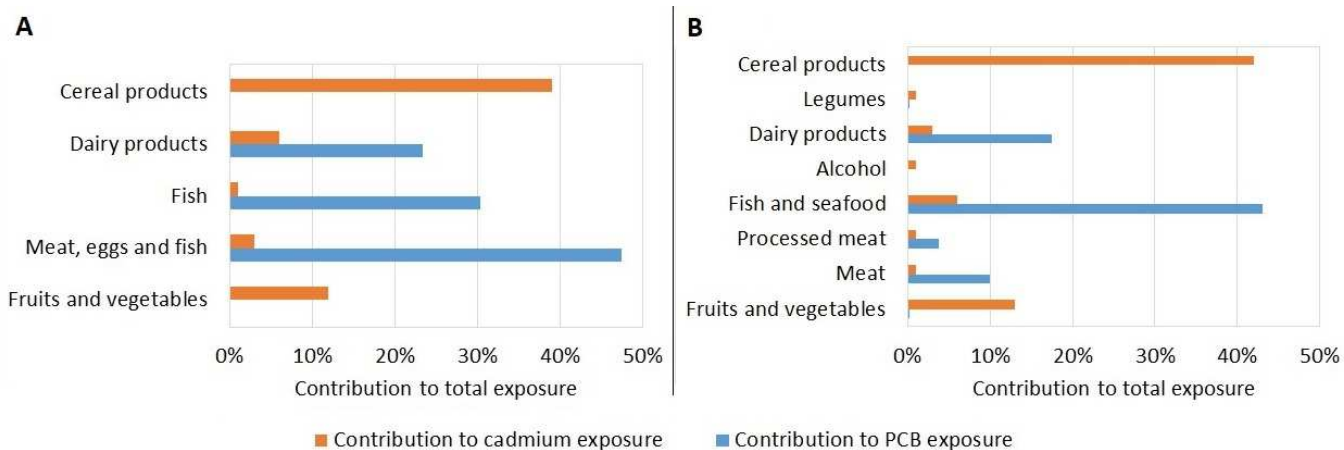
### 171 3.1. Selection of FBDGs

172 For children under the age of 5 months, the exclusive consumption of infant formula adapted to age  
173 was considered. In the SFAE survey, too few children between the ages of 5 and 12 months, amongst  
174 the already low headcount, had dietary habits following FBDGs to be able to fit a statistical  
175 distribution to exposures of individuals following FBDGs. For children between 1 and 3 years old,  
176 FBDGs covering dairy products and meat, fish and eggs were considered.

177 In the INCA2 survey, food groups covered by at least one quantitative FBDG were cereal products,  
178 legumes, dairy products, alcohol, fish, seafood, meat, fruits and vegetables. Amongst these food

179 groups, those contributing the most to cadmium dietary exposure were cereal products, fruits and  
 180 vegetables, plus dairy products for children and fish and seafood for adults. The food groups  
 181 contributing the most to PCB exposure were fish and seafood, dairy products and meat (Figure 1,  
 182 ANSES 2011).

183



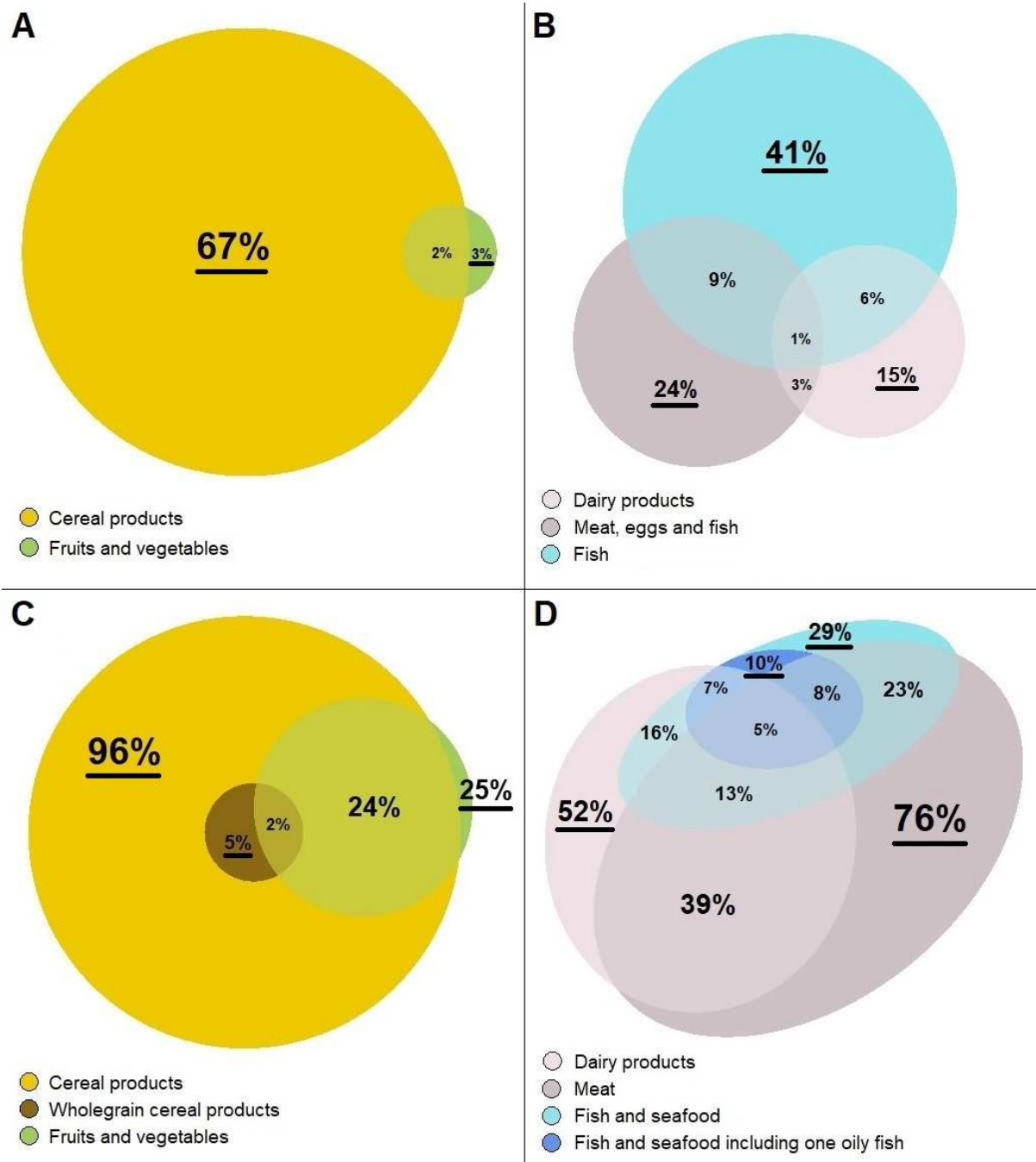
184

185 *Figure 1: Contribution of food groups covered by a FBDG to cadmium and PCB exposures for children (A) and adults (B)*

186

187 Individuals following FBDGs covering the most contributing food groups were scarce. For example,  
 188 96% of adults consumed cereal products every day but only 5% consumed wholegrain cereal  
 189 products every day. Furthermore, 25% of adults consumed at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables  
 190 per day, but only 2% consumed at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables and wholegrain cereal  
 191 products every day. Similarly, only 2% of children of the TDS2 population followed FBDGs covering  
 192 cereals products, fruits and vegetables. Considering FBDGs covering dairy products, meat, eggs and  
 193 fish, only 1% of children and 5% of adults followed all of them (Figure 2). It was therefore necessary  
 194 to select FBDGs to have a sufficient number of individuals following the FBDGs in each age group, in  
 195 order to be able to fit a distribution to dietary exposures.

196



197

198 *Figure 2: Percentage of children (A, B) and adults (C, D) following FBDGs covering food groups contributing to cadmium (A,*  
 199 *C) and PCB (B, D) exposures in the TDS2. Underline values correspond to the percentages of individuals following at least one*  
 200 *FBDG. Other values correspond to percentages of individuals following a combination of FBDGs.*

201

202 FBDGs selected to simulate dietary exposure trajectories to cadmium and PCBs for the sub-  
 203 population following FBDGs are presented in Table 1. For cadmium, selected FBDGs were followed by

204 67% of children and 24% of adults in the INCA2 survey population. For PCBs, 9% of children and 13%  
 205 of adults followed FBDGs.

206

207 *Table 1: FBDGs selected to simulate lifetime exposure trajectories to cadmium and PCBs*

	Cadmium	PCBs
Infants (1-4 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusive consumption of infant formula adapted to age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusive consumption of infant formula adapted to age</li> </ul>
Infants (1-3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 800 mL of milk and dairy products per day</li> <li>• 30 g of meat, fish or egg per day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 800 mL of milk and dairy products per day</li> <li>• 30 g of meat, fish or egg per day</li> </ul>
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereal products at each meal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 portions of fish per week</li> <li>• 1 or 2 portions of meat, eggs or fish per day, with size of portions evolving with age</li> </ul>
Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables per day</li> <li>• Cereal products every day (but not necessarily wholegrain or unrefined)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 portions of fish and seafood per week (but not necessarily including one oily fish)</li> <li>• 2 portions of dairy products per day</li> <li>• Maximum 500 grams of red meat per week</li> </ul>

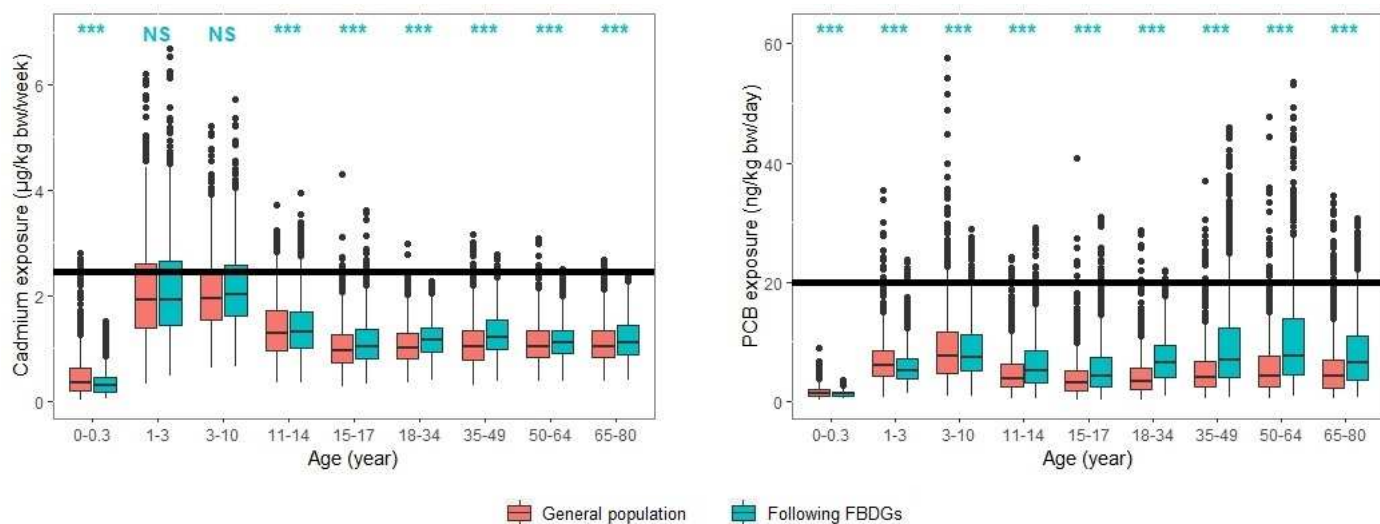
208

209 **3.2. Exposure trajectories**

210 Above the age of 10, dietary exposures to cadmium and PCBs were significantly lower in the general  
 211 population than those in individuals following the selected FBDGs (Figure 3). During the first months

212 of life, cadmium and PCB dietary exposures were significantly lower for children consuming  
 213 exclusively infant formula than those for children having a diversified diet. Differences of exposure  
 214 distributions between both populations were more pronounced for PCB exposures than for cadmium  
 215 exposures, for which differences of exposure were not biologically relevant because there were  
 216 small. This may be due to the fact that PCBs are mostly present in fatty foods whereas cadmium is a  
 217 ubiquitous chemical. Consequently, the impact of FBDGs on exposures appears more pronounced in  
 218 the case of PCBs than in the case of cadmium. For example, fish, seafood, dairy products and meat  
 219 contribute to more than 70% to PCB exposure in adults whereas fruits, vegetables and cereal  
 220 products contribute to 55% to cadmium exposure. Moreover, we can observe that, in particular for  
 221 individuals above the age of 10, PCB exposure distribution were shifted to the right. Thus, exposures  
 222 were higher for individuals following the FBDGs, on average but although for highest exposures.  
 223 However, because exposures were obtained from fitted distributions, the level of confidence in the  
 224 extreme values, simulated from the distribution tail, is low.

225



226

227 *Figure 3: Distributions of cadmium and PCB exposures fitted in data from the TDS2, according to age group and following of*  
 228 *the selected FBDGs. Dots represent outlier exposures (i.e. exposures higher than the third quartile plus 1.5 times the*  
 229 *interquartile range) and indications above boxplots illustrate the statistical Kolmogorov-Smirnov test significance (NS: Not*  
 230 *Significant, \*\*\*: p-value<0.001). Horizontal black lines represent HBGVs.*

231

232 Comparing lifetime exposure trajectories of both studied populations, the mean PCB exposure  
233 through life appeared on average 1.5 times higher for individuals following FBDGs than for  
234 individuals of the general population. For cadmium, differences were not as pronounced as for PCBs:  
235 average lifelong exposures were 1.2 µg Cd/kg bw/week in the general population and  
236 1.3 µg Cd/kg bw/week for individuals following FBDGs (Table 2).

237 However, not all FBDGs have been taken into account because of the small number of individuals  
238 following all FBDGs. For example, for the simulation of PCB exposure trajectories, the FBDGs covering  
239 butter consumption were not considered because they were not quantifiable, whereas butter  
240 contributes to 11.7% of the PCB exposure in children over the age of 3 and to 11.1% of the PCB  
241 exposure in adults. Since the FNHP recommends to limit the use of fats and to give preference to fats  
242 of vegetable origin, following this FBDG would lead to decrease the butter consumption. Because  
243 concentrations of PCBs in vegetable oils and margarine are on average 10 times lower than those  
244 measured in butter (ANSES 2011), decreasing butter consumption would mean decreasing PCB  
245 dietary exposure. On the contrary, the FNHP recommends to consume one portion of oily fish per  
246 week for a satisfactory intake of omega 3 (ANSES 2016a). Because of the high lipophilicity of PCBs,  
247 they are more concentrated in oily fish than in other fish. Therefore, strict compliance with fish  
248 consumption guidelines would lead to higher PCB dietary exposures.

249 The main FBDGs for infants until the beginning of the seventh month is exclusive breastfeeding. For  
250 cadmium, impact of breastfeeding on infants' exposures was assumed negligible because of the low  
251 levels of cadmium in breast milk (ATSDR 2012; EFSA 2009; Lehmann et al. 2018). On the contrary, it  
252 has already been demonstrated that breastfeeding exposes infants to much higher levels of PCBs  
253 than formula feeding (Lehmann et al. 2018). However, PCB plasma concentrations were shown to  
254 decrease after cessation of breastfeeding and to converge to body burden of formula-fed children in  
255 adulthood (Pruvost-Couvreur et al. 2020b). Thus, a risk related to PCB exposures via breastfeeding

256 cannot be excluded, particularly because it occurs during a critical period for child development.  
257 Consequently, the transitory nature of high PCB exposures via breast milk, as well as the  
258 uncertainties associated with critical values for young children, have to be studied further in order to  
259 quantify the long-term impact on health of PCB exposures related to the following of breastfeeding  
260 guidelines.

261 In order to assess health risk related to dietary exposures, lifetime trajectories were compared with  
262 health based guidance values (HBGVs). The HBGV for PCBs was 20 ng PCB/kg bw/day as selected by  
263 several health agencies (AFSSA 2007; ATSDR 2000; RIVM 2001; US EPA 1994). The HBGV for cadmium  
264 was the value of 2.45 µg Cd/kg bw/week set by ANSES (2017) and close to the value of  
265 2.5 µg Cd/kg bw/week set by EFSA (2009).

266 On average, the general population exceeded the HBGV for PCBs during 113 weeks through life  
267 whereas individuals following FBDGs covering fish, meat and dairy products exceeded the HBGV  
268 during 310 weeks. In simulations, the mean magnitude of exceedance of the HBGV through life was  
269 8.9 ng/kg bw/day. For individuals following FBDGs the mean magnitude of exceedance of the HBGV  
270 through life was 10.3 ng/kg bw/ (Table 2).

271 For cadmium, durations of exceedances of the selected HBGV were similar for both simulated  
272 populations: on average 3.7 years through life for the general population and 3.9 years for individuals  
273 following FBDGs. Magnitudes of exceedance of the HBGV were similar for both populations: the  
274 mean magnitude through life was 0.7 µg/kg bw/week and the maximum magnitude was on average  
275 5.8 µg/kg bw/week (Table 2).

276 However, it should be noted that the proposed method for simulating lifetime exposure trajectories  
277 does not cover all the variability that would be observed in a population following the FBDGs  
278 throughout its lifetime, just as the variability of the general population is not covered. Indeed,  
279 Pruvost-Couvreur et al. (2020a) showed that taking into account individual profiles allows a greater  
280 variability of exposure in the simulated population. In fact, considering individual profiles makes

281 possible to isolate characteristics that influence exposure over the life course, leading to more  
282 extreme lifetime exposures than those observed in this study. However, the low number of  
283 individuals following FBDGs in the INCA2 survey did not allow us to examine scenarios considering  
284 complex individual profiles while taking into account the correlation between following FBDGs and  
285 socioeconomic characteristics.

286 Conversely, a part of the simulated variability is overestimated. Indeed, at the individual level,  
287 consumption habits related to food tastes and household habits are not considered, even though  
288 they smooth exposures over the long term. However, methods that reduce intra-individual variance  
289 used regularly in dietary risk assessment, as those presented in Goedhart et al. (2012) and Mancini et  
290 al. (2015), do not allow the consideration of changes in food consumption behaviours over time and  
291 have therefore not been used here.

292 Consequently, the variability at the population level is underestimated but the individual total  
293 variance is overestimated. It should therefore be kept in mind, that the results presented here are  
294 average cases and do not represent the total variability of a general French population.

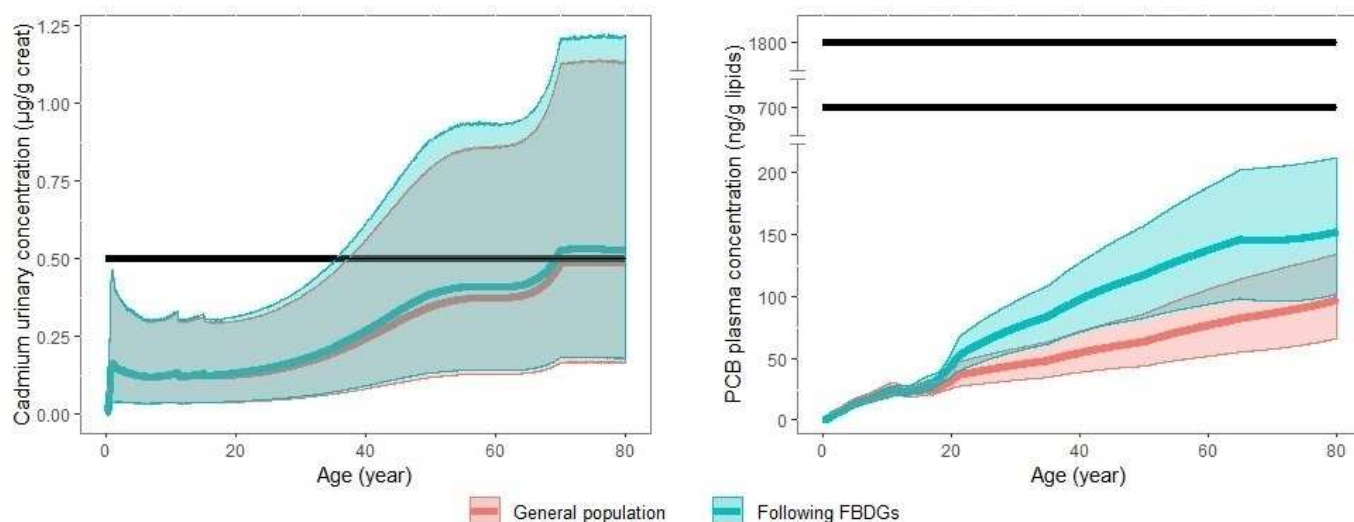
295

### 296 3.3. Body burden trajectories and risk assessment

297 Body burdens were expressed as the concentration of PCBs in plasma, adjusted to lipid weight, and  
298 for cadmium by the concentration of cadmium excreted in urine, adjusted to creatinine.

299 For cadmium and PCBs, body burdens increased through life because of bioaccumulation (Figure 4).





300

301 *Figure 4: Mean cadmium and PCB body burden trajectories and 95% prediction intervals, according to following of selected*  
 302 *FBDGs. Horizontal black lines represent critical concentrations.*

303

304 Cadmium body burden trajectories of the general population and individuals following FBDGs were  
 305 similar. The concentration of cadmium in urine was on average 0.2 µg/g creatinine at the age of 40  
 306 and 0.5 µg/g creatinine at the age of 80 for the general population. For individuals following FBDGs,  
 307 cadmium body burdens were 0.3 and 0.5 µg/g creatinine at 40 and 80, respectively (Table 2).

308 PCB plasma concentrations were higher for individuals following FBDGs than for the general  
 309 population (PCB plasma concentration ratios between both populations were around 1.8 at 40 years  
 310 old and 1.6 at 80 years old, Table 2).

311

312 *Table 2: Description of dietary exposure and body burden trajectories for cadmium and PCBs. Comparison with HBGVs and*  
 313 *critical concentrations according to following of FBDGs. Given values are means in the considered population and 95%*  
 314 *prediction intervals (NR: Not Relevant).*

Population	Cadmium		PCBs	
	General	Following FBDGs	General	Following FBDGs
Mean exposure	1.2 µg/kg	1.3 µg/kg	5.7 ng/kg	8.8 ng/kg

through life	bw/week [1.2; 1.3]	bw/week [1.3; 1.4]	bw/day [5.5; 5.8]	bw/day [8.5; 9.0]
Duration of exceedance of the HBGV	3.7 years [3.3; 4.2]	3.9 years [3.5; 4.4]	2.2 years [1.8; 2.6]	5.8 years [5.3; 6.5]
Mean magnitude of exceedance of the HBGV	0.7 µg/kg/week [0.6; 0.8]	0.7 µg/kg/week [0.6; 0.8]	8.9 ng/kg/day [7.0; 10.9]	10.3 ng/kg/day [9.0; 11.7]
Maximum magnitude of exceedance of the HBGV	5.8 µg/kg/week [3.1; 12.8]	5.8 µg/kg/week [3.0; 12.5]	59.3 ng/kg/day [34.3; 103.4]	77.1 ng/kg/day [55.6; 96.2]
Body burden at 40	0.2 µg/g creat [0.08; 0.6]	0.3 µg/g creat [0.09; 0.6]	54.3 ng/g lip [38.6; 71.7]	96.9 ng/g lip [70.4; 126.5]
Body burden at 80	0.5 µg/g creat [0.2; 1.1]	0.5 µg/g creat [0.2; 1.2]	97.0 ng/g lip [65.9; 133.8]	147.9 ng/g lip [99.8; 205.5]
Percentage of the population exceeding the critical concentration over the life course	40.8% [39.9; 41.7]	47.9% [46.9; 48.8]	0%	0%
Age of first exceedance for people exceeding the critical concentration	50.1 years [0.6; 70.8]	50.5 years [0.6; 70.5]	NR	NR

315

316 To assess the health risk related to lifetime body burdens, simulated trajectories were compared  
317 with critical concentrations. For cadmium, the value of 0.5 µg Cd/g creatinine in urine, set by ANSES  
318 (2017) based on skeletal effects and by ATSDR (2012) based on renal effects, was selected. For PCBs,  
319 ANSES derived two critical values: 700 ng/g lipids for children under the age of 3, young girls and  
320 women of childbearing age, and 1 800 ng/g lipids for boys over the age of 3, adult men and women  
321 above the age of 45 (AFSSA 2010).

322 Differences in terms of cadmium body burden between the general population and individuals  
323 following FBDGs were low. In both populations, more than 40% of individuals had cadmium  
324 concentrations in urine higher than the critical concentration of 0.5 µg/g creatinine. The mean age, at  
325 the first exceedance for individuals exceeding the critical concentration, was around 50 years old for  
326 both populations (Table 2). These simulations may be validated by comparison with cadmium urinary  
327 concentrations measured in the French population. The ENNS study recorded in 2006 a geometric  
328 mean of 0.27 µg/g creatinine and a 95<sup>th</sup> percentile of 0.79 µg/g creatinine in 913 non-smokers  
329 between 18 and 74 years of age (Fréry et al. 2011). In comparison, the geometric means of body  
330 burdens simulated between 18 and 74 years old were 0.2 µg/g creatinine and 0.3 µg/g creatinine for  
331 the general population and individuals following FBDGs, respectively. The 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles were 0.7  
332 and 0.8 µg/g creatinine.

333 No individual in the simulated population had PCB body burdens exceeding the critical  
334 concentrations of 700 and 1 800 ng/g plasma lipids (Table 3). However, because exposure  
335 trajectories were simulated from food contamination data measured in 2006-2007, the evolution of  
336 contamination was not considered. Even if it was shown that cadmium food concentrations did not  
337 change much in past years (EFSA 2009; Pruvost-Couvreur et al. 2020a), PCB dietary exposures varied  
338 through last decades because of regulations (IARC 2016). This evolution was shown to have lifetime  
339 impact on PCB plasma concentrations (Pruvost-Couvreur et al. 2020b). Thus, trajectories simulated in  
340 this work do not reflect actual body burdens of the French adult population. However, they allow the  
341 quantification of the impact of FBDGs on lifetime body burden with present food contamination. This  
342 modelling highlights that, with the actual food contaminations, lifetime PCB plasma concentrations  
343 remain far below the reference values of 700 and 1 800 ng/g lipids. However, it must be noted that,  
344 when considering a scenario of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life, as  
345 recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO 2017), PCB body burdens would be higher in  
346 early childhood than that was simulated in this work, and may exceed the critical concentration  
347 during a short but critical period for child development (Pruvost-Couvreur et al. 2020b).

348 This work highlights the difficulty of deriving FBDGs that cover nutritional requirements while limiting  
349 the exposure to contaminants. In fact, considering only nutritional requirements, a first theoretical  
350 scenario had been computed by ANSES in order to study the possibility of covering all nutritional  
351 requirements with foods currently available (ANSES 2016a). The results of this scenario showed that  
352 to cover nutritional requirements, oily fish consumption should be from 5 to 12 times higher than the  
353 average actual consumption in the population measured in the INCA2 survey and the consumption of  
354 wholegrain cereal products should be much higher than that actually consumed in the population  
355 (about 315 times higher than the average measured in the INCA2 survey). However, considering the  
356 limits imposed by French dietary habits, some constraints had to be relaxed in the optimisation  
357 model. In addition, due to the contamination of certain foods as fish (especially with methylmercury  
358 and PCBs), other constraints were relaxed in order to limit the consumption of highly contaminated  
359 foods. These new constraints led to decrease the consumption of oily fish, which is rich in long-chain  
360 omega-3 fatty acids and therefore helps to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular diseases. Similarly,  
361 the quantity of wholegrain cereal products has been reduced in favour of refined products, despite  
362 the fact that the latter are less rich in fibre.

363 In the case of PCBs, these results are supported by a benefit/risk analysis (Sirot et al. 2012a) and  
364 show that until there is a decrease in food contamination, a balance between nutritional intake and  
365 food contamination is necessary.

366

## 367 4. Conclusions

368 Lifetime PCB body burdens were higher for individuals following FBDGs covering fish, meat and dairy  
369 products than those for the general population but in all cases they remain below critical values.

370 For cadmium, lifetime exposures and body burdens were similar for both populations. Our  
371 simulations showed that following or not the FBDGs covering cereal products, fruits and vegetables,  
372 exceedances of critical internal concentrations were similar.

373 If recommendations are established to minimise the exposure to contaminants while optimising  
374 nutrients intakes, they induce PCB exposures and body burdens higher than those observed in the  
375 general population: there is a 1.8 factor at the age of 40 between PCB plasma concentrations of the  
376 general population and of individuals following the FBDGs during their entire life. Furthermore, even  
377 if FBDGs do not induce higher cadmium exposures than those measured in the general population,  
378 they lead to body burdens exceeding the critical value for a large part of the population.

379 For both PCBs and cadmium, the foods on which action should be taken to reduce exposure are also  
380 those that contribute to the benefits of the diet proposed by FBDGs. Vegetables, fruits and  
381 wholegrain cereal products food groups are on average major contributors to cadmium exposure but  
382 reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and type 2 diabetes. Similarly, fish and  
383 particularly oily fish are one average major contributors to PCB exposure but reduce the risk of  
384 cardiovascular diseases. Even if environmental contaminations are decreasing and are expecting to  
385 decrease further in the coming years, efforts should be continued to limit the contamination of  
386 certain food groups. In addition, it is necessary to consider the French eating habits when developing  
387 FBDGs, in order to propose guidelines that are acceptable by the population. This constraint also  
388 limits the actions that can be implemented to reduce exposure to food contaminants.

389 Even though the simulation method can be improved to better estimate the inter- and intra-  
390 individual variabilities, and consequently the extreme trajectories, these results highlight the  
391 relevance to study the long-term impact of specific dietary patterns on lifetime exposures and body  
392 burdens when establishing FBDGs. In addition, a potential improvement would be to be able to  
393 consider more precise food groups, making it possible to refine the assessment of exposures to food  
394 contaminants, and thus to adjust the scenarios for optimising FBDGs.

## 395 References

- 396 AFSSA. 2007. Avis de l'AFSSA relatif à l'établissement des teneurs maximales pertinentes en  
397 polychlorobiphényles qui ne sont pas de type dioxine (PCB « non dioxin-like », PCB-ndl) dans divers  
398 aliments. <https://www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/RCCP2006sa0305b.pdf>.
- 399 AFSSA. 2009. Summary of the individual and national study on food consumption 2 (INCA2) 2006-  
400 2007. [www.anses.fr/en/system/files/PASER-Sy-INCA2EN.pdf](http://www.anses.fr/en/system/files/PASER-Sy-INCA2EN.pdf).
- 401 AFSSA. 2010. Opinion of the French food safety agency on interpreting the health impact of PCB  
402 concentration levels in the French population.  
403 <https://www.anses.fr/en/system/files/RCCP2008sa0053EN.pdf>.
- 404 ANSES. 2011. Second French total diet study (TDS2): Inorganic contaminants, minerals, persistent  
405 organic pollutants, mycotoxins and phytoestrogens.  
406 <https://www.anses.fr/en/system/files/PASER2006sa0361Ra1EN.pdf>.
- 407 ANSES. 2016a. Updating of the PNNS guidelines: Revision of the food-based dietary guidelines.
- 408 ANSES. 2016b. Infant total diet study (iTDS): Summary and conclusions.  
409 <https://www.anses.fr/en/system/files/ERCA2010SA0317RaEN.pdf>.
- 410 ANSES. 2017. Exposition au cadmium - propositions de valeurs toxicologiques de référence par  
411 ingestion, de valeurs sanitaires repères dans les milieux biologiques (sang, urine, ...).  
412 [www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/VSR2015SA0140Ra-1.pdf](http://www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/VSR2015SA0140Ra-1.pdf).
- 413 ANSES. 2019. Avis de l'agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement  
414 et du travail relatif à l'actualisation des repères alimentaires du PNNS pour les enfants de 0 à 3 ans.  
415 [www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/NUT2017SA0145.pdf](http://www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/NUT2017SA0145.pdf).
- 416 ATSDR. 2000. Toxicological profile for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Atlanta, GA:Department of  
417 Health and Human Services.
- 418 ATSDR. 2012. Toxicological profile for cadmium. Atlanta, GA:Department of Health and Human  
419 Services.
- 420 Commission of the European communities. 2006. Commission regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 of 19  
421 December 2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs.
- 422 Delignette-Muller ML, Dutand C, Pouillot R, Denis JB, Silberchicot A. 2019. Fitdistrplus: Help to fit of a  
423 parametric distribution to non-censored or censored data. R package version 1.0-14. [https://cran.r-  
424 project.org/web/packages/fitdistrplus/fitdistrplus.pdf](https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/fitdistrplus/fitdistrplus.pdf).
- 425 EFSA. 2005. Opinion of the scientific panel on contaminants in the food chain on a request from the  
426 commission related to the presence of non dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) in feed and  
427 food. EFSA Journal 284:1-137.
- 428 EFSA. 2009. Cadmium in food: Scientific opinion of the panel on contaminants in food chain. EFSA  
429 Journal 980:1-139.
- 430 Fantino M, Gourmet E. 2008. Nutrient intakes in 2005 by non-breast fed French children of less than  
431 36 months. Arch Pediatr 15:446-455.

432 FAO. 2020. Food-based dietary guidelines. Available: [www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-](http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/)  
433 [guidelines/en/](http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/) [accessed May 2020].

434 Fréry N, Saoudi A, Garnier R, Zeghnoun A, Falq G. 2011. Exposition de la population française aux  
435 substances de l'environnement - tome 1. INVS.

436 Goedhart PW, van der Voet H, Knüppel S, Dekkers ALM, Dodd KW, Boeing H, et al. 2012. A  
437 comparison by simulation of different methods to estimate the usual intake distribution for  
438 episodically consumed foods. Supporting Publications 2012:EN-299.  
439 [www.efsa.europa.eu/publications](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/publications).

440 HCPH. 2017. Statement related to the update of the French nutrition and health programme's dietary  
441 guidelines for adults for the period 2017-2021. French High Council for Public Health.

442 Hercberg S, Chat-Yung S, Chaulia M. 2008. The French National Nutrition and Health Program: 2001-  
443 2006-2010. *Int J Public Health* 53:68-77.

444 IARC. 2016. IARC monographs on the evaluation of carcinogenic risks to human: Polychlorinated  
445 biphenyls and polybrominated biphenyls.

446 INPES. 2015. Le guide de nutrition des enfants et ados pour tous les parents.

447 Kjellström T, Nordberg GF. 1978. A kinetic model of cadmium metabolism in the human being.  
448 *Environmental Research* 16:248-269.

449 Lehmann GM, LaKind JS, Davis MH, Hines EP, Marchitti SA, Alcalá C, et al. 2018. Environmental  
450 chemicals in breast milk and formula: Exposure and risk assessment implications. *Environmental*  
451 *health perspectives* 126:96001.

452 Mancini FR, Sirot V, Busani L, Volatier JL, Hulin M. 2015. Use and impact of usual intake models on  
453 dietary exposure estimate and risk assessment of chemical substances: A practical example for  
454 cadmium, acrylamide and sulphites. *Food Addit Contam Part A Chem Anal Control Expo Risk Assess*  
455 32:1065-1074.

456 Pruvost-Couvreur M, Le Bizec B, Béchaux C, Rivière G. 2020a. A method to assess lifetime dietary risk:  
457 Example of cadmium exposure. *Food and Chemical Toxicology* 137.

458 Pruvost-Couvreur M, Rivière G, Béchaux C, Le Bizec B. 2020b. Impact of sociodemographic profile,  
459 generation and bioaccumulation on lifetime dietary and internal exposure to PCBs. *Under review*.

460 Public Health Code. 2010. Article l323-1.

461 RIVM. 2001. Re-evaluation of human-toxicological maximum permissible risk levels.  
462 <https://www.rivm.nl/bibliotheek/rapporten/711701025.pdf>.

463 Schulze MB, Martinez-Gonzalez MA, Fung TT, Lichtenstein AH, Forouhi NG. 2018. Food based dietary  
464 patterns and chronic disease prevention. *BMJ (Clinical research ed)* 361:k2396.

465 Sirot V, Leblanc J-C, Margaritis I. 2012a. A risk-benefit analysis approach to seafood intake to  
466 determine optimal consumption. *The British journal of nutrition* 107:1812-1822.

467 Sirot V, Tard A, Venisseau A, Brosseaud A, Marchand P, Le Bizec B, et al. 2012b. Dietary exposure to  
468 polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins, polychlorinated dibenzofurans and polychlorinated biphenyls of  
469 the French population: Results of the second French total diet study. *Chemosphere* 88:492-500.

470 US EPA. 1994. Integrated risk information system (IRIS) - Chemical assessment summary - Aroclor  
471 1254. Available:  
472 [https://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/iris/iris\\_documents/documents/subst/0389\\_summary.pdf](https://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/iris/iris_documents/documents/subst/0389_summary.pdf) [accessed  
473 June 2019].

474 WHO. 2017. 10 facts on breastfeeding. [accessed January 2018].

475 WHO/FAO. 2003. Diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases: Report of a joint WHO/FAO  
476 expert consultation. (WHO technical report series). Geneva.

477



## 478 Figure and table captions

479 Figure 1: Contribution of food groups covered by a FBDG to cadmium and PCB exposures for children  
480 (A) and adults (B)

481 Figure 2: Percentage of children (A, B) and adults (C, D) following FBDGs covering food groups  
482 contributing to cadmium (A, C) and PCB (B, D) exposures in the TDS2. Underline values correspond to  
483 the percentages of individuals following at least one FBDG. Other values correspond to percentages  
484 of individuals following a combination of FBDGs.

485 Table 1: FBDGs selected to simulate lifetime exposure trajectories to cadmium and PCBs

486 Figure 3: Distributions of cadmium and PCB exposures fitted in data from the TDS2, according to age  
487 group and following of the selected FBDGs. Dots represent outlier exposures (i.e. exposures higher  
488 than the third quartile plus 1.5 times the interquartile range) and indications above boxplots  
489 illustrate the statistical Kolmogorov-Smirnov test significance (NS: Not Significant, \*\*\*: p-  
490 value<0.001). Horizontal black lines represent HBGVs.

491 Figure 4: Mean cadmium and PCB body burden trajectories and 95% prediction intervals, according  
492 to following of selected FBDGs. Horizontal black lines represent critical concentrations.

493 Table 2: Description of dietary exposure and body burden trajectories for cadmium and PCBs.  
494 Comparison with HBGVs and critical concentrations according to following of the FBDGs. Given  
495 values are means in the considered population and 95% prediction intervals (NR: Not Relevant).

496

497

498