



FoodMed  
CERTIFIED

**bitewell**



Certification for:

Outcomes

Expires October 30, 2024



[www.foodmedcertified.com/](http://www.foodmedcertified.com/)

VALIDATION INSTITUTE, 250 First Avenue, Suite 301, Needham, MA 02494



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# Company Profile

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<b>Category:</b>	<b>Health Outcomes</b>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="https://www.bitewell.com/">https://www.bitewell.com/</a>
<b>Public or Private:</b>	Private
<b>Year Established:</b>	2020
<b>CEO:</b>	Samantha Citro Alexander
<b>Company contact:</b>	sam@bitewell.com

## Description Provided by the Company:

**bitewell** is on a mission to improve the world's health through food. A leader in the food-as-medicine space, **bitewell's** digital food pharmacy is an online store that personalizes the food shopping experience based on members' health conditions and goals. Currently, the FoodHealth Score offers tailored food guidance for 28 health conditions.

**bitewell's** algorithm assigns a numerical score from 0 through 10 to all the food available around a member and then curates a selection of healthy food options for purchase, ranging from prepared meals, groceries, produce and protein boxes. Only foods with a FoodHealth Score of five or higher are available for purchase, and members can learn more about why these products are good for them while browsing.

Members can access **bitewell's** digital food pharmacy through a participating health plan, wellness program or provider.



# Overview of FoodMed Certification

## Review Components

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Validation Institute's independent review of medical nutrition and food programs guides purchasers on selecting effective, well-designed programs. Programs that earn the Food Med Certified designation will meet the standards shown below.

- **Program Foundation** – The output, such as guidance to consumers or care plans for medical professionals, is based upon reliable and credible data. Selection of this data is overseen by appropriately licensed and experienced people. In addition, the data must come from recognized, accredited sources; users' data can be used to refine the output over time. The program has systems and procedures managed by competent personnel to ensure this data is accurate and up to date. If the data sources and systems are handled by a contractor, the program must show that the contracts provide for all of the requirements.
- **Target Population/ Enrollment and Communications** – Prospective users are given accurate and reasonable descriptions of the program and its results. The program will report the following:
  - Size of eligible population, if possible.
  - Definition of enrolled (such as minimum number of visits or interactions)
  - Enrollment attrition and cause, such as lack of engagement or loss of eligibility



# Overview of FoodMed Certification

## Review Components

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- **Program Delivery** – The program will demonstrate how it addresses users’ barriers to optimal use. Barriers related to Social Determinants of Health and to cultural factors will be addressed. If the end user is a medical professional, then the program could integrate with existing record and workflow systems. If the end user is a consumer, the program needs to show how it accommodates different needs and preferences. The program also must show how it monitors program delivery success.
- **Health Outcomes** – If health outcomes are part of the program, the program will show how these are measured. Survey tools should generally be validated and be administered in the way they were validated. (Note: Food programs can separately have their health outcomes validated.) The program’s website and enrollment materials will show health outcomes based upon a minimum of 12 months of participant data; shorter time periods are allowed for health conditions whose treatment regimens are shorter. Where the outcome is weight loss, 24 months of participant data and post-program data are preferred.





# Program Goal

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The goal of bitewell's FoodHealth Score is to give people simple, clear guidance on diet choices that have a proven impact on chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and high blood cholesterol.



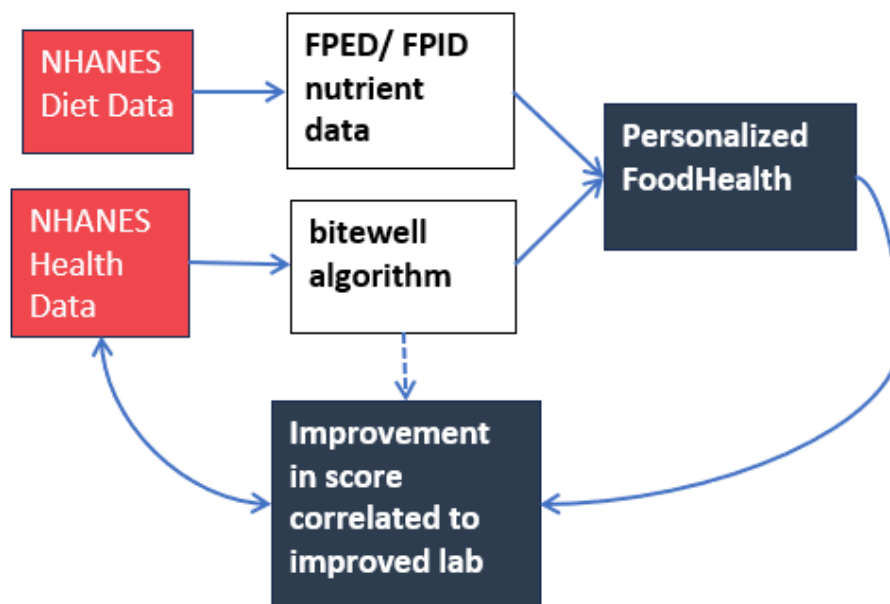
# Program Foundation

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For development, the FoodHealth Score used data from National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data (NHANES) from 2005 to 2018, covering 26,917 people. NHANES is a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults who provide data from a food diary, lab tests, health habits (such as smoking), and personal traits (age, gender, etc.)

The health, diet, and personal data was then analyzed. The diet data was assessed using the Food Patterns Equivalents (FPED) and Food Product Information (FPID) databases. The analysis combined this assessment with the health data to create an individual score, called the FoodHealth Score.

Improvement in the FoodHealth Score links to lower health risks and better biometric measures. For example, improvement in the FoodHealth Score by one point is linked to lowering the total cholesterol to HDL ratio by 0.08 units.



# Target Population

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Adults who have chronic diet-related health conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol, will use the FoodHealth Score to find ways to improve their diet and thereby improve their chronic condition. More chronic conditions may be added in the future.

bitewell plans to design data-gathering methods that maximize the value of the FoodHealth Score and keep the data input burden manageable. Further analysis could reveal which personal traits or health habits have the strongest influence on outcomes. For example, race has been shown to impact success from high blood pressure treatment. (Michael Mueller, 2015)

Program enrollment communications were not reviewed.







# Program Delivery

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The FoodHealth Score is a recommendation & tracking metric utilized throughout bitewell's digital food pharmacy. The digital food pharmacy is bitewell's online store that scores foods and beverages from various food vendors. Purchasable products include groceries, meal kits, prepared meals, fresh meat and produce boxes, and more.

**Insight Tool:** The FoodHealth Score is a 0 to 10 scoring system that helps users identify which foods and beverages are best for their health needs based on their health conditions, dietary needs, and dietary preferences. As users add items to their cart and checkout in the digital food pharmacy, their average FoodHealth Score is tracked. bitewell recommends maintaining an average FoodHealth Score between 7 and 10 for optimal health outcomes.

**Incentive Tool:** To improve accessibility to healthy food, bitewell helps subsidize purchases on its platform by 1) allowing clients to fund their employees, patients, etc. with a healthy eating stipend redeemable only on bitewell and 2) rewarding high-scoring purchases with Healthy Eating Benefit points, redeemable for future digital food pharmacy purchases.





# Health Outcomes

Table 1 summarizes the health outcome improvements associated with a one-point improvement in the FoodHealth Score. For example, a 1-point improvement in FoodHealth Score was associated with lower blood pressure among individuals in the NHANES dataset.

Data on FoodHealth Score users' outcomes will be available after the program is implemented and datasets are compiled.

Health measure	For every point of FoodHealth Score improvement, measure improved . . . .
HDL-C (Blood lipids)	+1.65 mg
Total cholesterol to HDL ratio	-0.08 units
Systolic blood pressure	-0.33 mmHg
Diastolic blood pressure	-0.53 mmHg
HbA1c (blood glucose)	-0.02%
Body Mass Index	-0.88 kg/m <sup>2</sup>
Waist-to-hip ratio	-0.01 units

Table 1: Impact of One Point FoodHealth Score improvement





# Summary of Results

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bitewell's development of the FoodHealth Score used credible data sources and appropriate statistical models. The Score was shown to have a strong link to health outcomes, such as blood pressure and blood glucose (HbA1c). Similar approaches can be used to add more health conditions with data from bitewell users.





# Works Cited

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1. Michael Mueller, T. S. (2015). Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Hypertension Prevention and Control: What Will It Take to Translate Research into Practice and Policy? *American Journal of Hypertension*, 699–716.





# Certificate of Achievement

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## FoodHealth Score

Certified Program

**bitewell**

Denver, Colorado 80216, US

Company

## Certificate Level: Health Outcomes

The goal of bitewell's FoodHealth Score is to give people simple, clear guidance on diet choices that have a proven impact on chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and high blood cholesterol.

**January 2024**

Award Date

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**Linda Riddell**  
**Chief Data Scientist**  
**Validation Institute**

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**Vidar Jorgensen**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Validation Institute**



# About FoodMed Certified and Validation Institute

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**FoodMed Certified**, a Validation Institute (VI) program, vets and verifies the effectiveness of nutritional programs and tools that enable individuals and employers to manage their health and healthcare solutions. By leveraging VI's validation process for its Food is Medicine program, FoodMed Certified brings transparency to the market by delivering unbiased insights into effective nutritional programs. Validation Institute is a membership organization comprising healthcare vendors, benefits advisors, and managers that offers unbiased, data-driven insights on healthcare solutions and services to drive transparency and cost-savings.

This approach highlights the significance of utilizing data-driven solutions to bring about positive change and encourage healthy habits.

**Validation Institute** is a professional community that advocates for organizations and approaches that deliver better health value - stronger health outcomes at lower cost. We connect, train, and certify health care purchasers, and we validate and connect providers delivering superior results. Founded in 2014, the mission of the organization has consistently been to help provide transparency to buyers of health care.

