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**Title**

Making your association relevant and interesting for politicians and decision-makers

**Abstract**

Politicians are not trained in diet-, nutrition- and health matters. So they have to seek advice from specialists before they make their decisions. There are thousands of health-, diet- and nutrition associations out there, of various quality. Just as many health bloggers and self-proclaimed experts. It is difficult for politicians knowing to whom they should listen. For a serious organization, it is therefore important to reach out to the decision-makers, and give them the right information. Because no one is going to find you on their own.

The Norwegian Diet and Nutrition Association has worked methodically on political lobbyism the last five years. We have asked for meetings with all the political parties, presenting our association, and what we stand for. We present our views in parliament hearings, which can be easily done by sending an e-mail, or by being there in person. We also contact health politicians directly, when it comes to subjects we care about. Our experience is that all politicians appreciate to be contacted, to receive information/suggestions. We also contact the government. Why shouldn't we? The government is there for us, not the other way around!

We also use the media. We write chronicles and articles, trying to get them published in national, regional and local newspapers, depending on what the subject is. Obviously, when we do, we spread it in social media. On several occasions we have contacted journalists directly on news events, to give comments, in case they plan to make a follow-up story. When we then appear in the news, it gets noticed by the politicians and decision-makers, because of the internet's search engines. When we started this work, we were happy if we got our view published in small, local newspapers. Today we get contacted by the big newspapers and national tv.

**Key references**

- *Appetitt på livet* (Appetite for life) 2015. Report on elderly food, written with the Norwegian Consumer Council
- EFAD Newsletter Jan 2018, on the elderly reform *Leve hele livet*.
- Author of three books about whisky, cognac and aquavit

**Key messages**

1. You must approach the politicians and decision-makers. Nobody is going to find your association on their own.
2. Politicians base their decisions on what they know. What they know is what they are told. So you have to tell them.
3. Dietetics and nutrition is complicated. Use some effort to get your message crystal clear.