



Take Action: TEACHERS

Eating well is a behaviour that can be learned and acquired through education, social supports and services in schools. As a teacher, you have the ability to positively impact your students' choices.

Did you know?

- Students who are well nourished have increased test scores, improved attendance, reduced tardiness, and better academic, behavioural and emotional functioning.¹
- Sweetened drink consumption is linked to increased rates of obesity in youth.²
- More BC youth are overweight and obese than a decade ago—29 percent and 9 percent respectively.³
- Seven out of 10 children aged 4 to 8 do not meet the five-serving minimum for Vegetable and Fruit. At ages 9 to 13, the figures are 62% for girls and 68% for boys.⁴
- Only 17 percent of children eat a lunch that includes choices from all four food groups in Canada's Food Guide.⁵
- More than 25 percent of students' calories come from foods of low nutrient value—pop, sweets and salty snacks.⁶
- Almost half of Grade 10 girls in BC indicate they are on a diet or think they need to lose weight, according to a McCreary Centre Society report.⁷

What can YOU do to support healthy eating at school?

Teach your students how to eat well and be physically active.

- Get a group of teachers together to attend a nutrition workshop as part of your professional development.
- Choose nutrition education programs that give your students the opportunity to practice what they learn. Make the lessons hands-on and fun by providing tasting opportunities.



- Link nutrition with physical activity by including exercise breaks throughout the day from *Action Schools! BC* (www.actionschoolsbc.ca) or starting a lunchtime walking club.
- Use the *Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Learning Resources* to support students in all grades (K-10) gain the knowledge and skills to make healthier choices and develop a life-long healthy lifestyle.
- Discuss with your Home Economics students about the value and benefits of the 2007 *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools* and why they were developed.

Make the healthy choice the easy choice.

- Share a list of healthy food and beverage choices with students, parents and staff. Start with basic ideas and adapt them according to the various cultures represented in the school.
- Use this list to select foods offered at parties, celebrations, sports events, social events, special lunch days and on field trips.
- Encourage parents to refer to the list when preparing their children's lunches and snacks.

Model healthy eating behaviours.

- Be a good role model—eat healthy foods. Your students are watching!
- Instead of food, use non-food items such as stickers or privileges as a classroom reward.

For more resources and facts on school nutrition, visit: www.HealthyEatingAtSchool.ca

1 "Diet, breakfast and academic performance in children". *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism*, Kleinman RE, Hall S, Green H, Korzec-Ramirez D, Patton K, Pagano ME and Murphy JM, 46 Supp 1: 24-30, 2002.

2 "Relation between consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks and childhood obesity". *Lancet*, Ludwig DS, Peterson KE and Gortmaker SL, 357:505, 2001.

3 "Canadian Community Health Survey: Obesity among children and adults", 2004. <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050706/d050706a.htm>

4 "Canadian Community Health Survey: Canadians' Eating Habits", 2004. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/82-620-MIE/82-620-MIE2006002.pdf>

5 "Canadian Eating Habits in 1997". *Market Facts*, 1998.

6 "Food habits of Canadians: Food sources of nutrients for the adolescent sample". *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, Phillips S, Jacobs Starkey L and Gray-Donald K, 65 (2): 81-84, Summer 2004.

7 "Young People In Canada: Their Health and Well Being", Chapter 7, Public Health Agency of Canada—Division of Childhood and Adolescence, William Boyce, 2004.