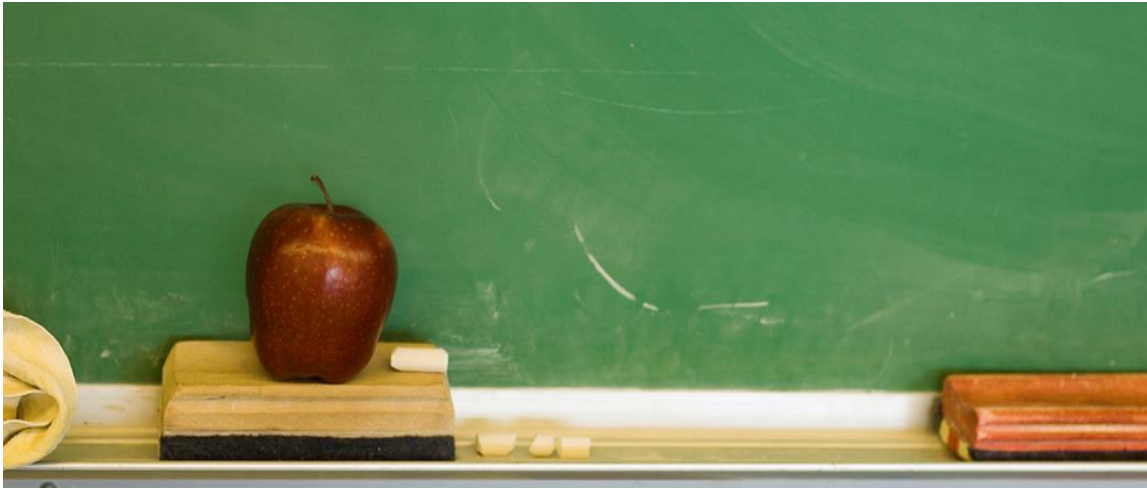


# TEACHING NUTRITION IN SASKATCHEWAN



## Health Education – Grade 8

Developed by: Saskatchewan Health Authority Public Health Nutritionists

The purpose of *Teaching Nutrition in Saskatchewan: Concepts and Resources* is to provide credible Canadian based nutrition information and resources based on the Saskatchewan Health Education Curriculum (2010).

The **Nutrition Concepts and Resources** section identifies nutrition concepts and resources relating to grade-specific provincial Health Education curriculum outcomes. These lists only refer to the curriculum outcomes that have an obvious logical association to nutrition. They are only suggestions and not exclusive.

The **Nutrition Background Information** section provides educators with current and reliable Canadian healthy eating information.

For more information, email the Population Health Department at:  
[populationhealth@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:populationhealth@saskhealthauthority.ca)

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## Teaching Nutrition to Children

Teaching about food and nutrition is important for the health and wellbeing of students. Below are some tips for teaching nutrition to children:

- Use current and credible nutrition information. *Teaching Nutrition in Saskatchewan* and dietitians are great sources of reliable nutrition information. When searching for health information on the internet, refer to [How to find food and nutrition information you can trust](#) from Unlockfood.ca for a few tips to make sure you get the best information.
- Include cross-curricular connections in the classroom. For example, when teaching fractions in math, illustrate the lesson using fruit instead of pie. Choose books and projects that show healthy food and eating habits. For examples of how to link nutrition to other Saskatchewan curricula, refer to The [Saskatchewan Curricular Outcomes and Nutrition](#), a resource from [Nourishing Minds Eat Well Learn well Live Well](#).
- Spread healthy eating lessons out throughout the year rather than in a short unit. Connect key messages to special events or classroom celebrations by offering or asking students to bring healthy options.
- Use experiential learning strategies to engage students. Let students work with food in the classroom, visit a grocery store, start a cooking club or a school garden.
- Avoid labelling foods as ‘good’ vs ‘bad’ or healthy vs unhealthy. Allowing kids to explore and learn about food while keeping it positive and language neutral will lead to better eating habits than avoidance-based education strategies like ‘don’t eat sugar’ or ‘saturated fat is bad.’
- Promote a positive relationship with food and physical activity without encouraging dieting or weight loss attitudes and behaviours. Ensure that all students, regardless of weight, shape or size, are equally valued and respected. Enforce that it is not acceptable to label fatness as bad or make comments about people’s size or shape. For more information refer to [Weight Bias](#) on page 18
- Be a good role model for students. Avoid talking negatively about foods or discuss dieting, weight loss or dissatisfaction of body shape or size.
- Do not make comments about student lunches or snacks and do not take food items away if they are not considered “healthy.” Eating looks different to everyone and what and how much people eat will depend on many factors. Children may have little control over what is in their lunch. Drawing attention to “unhealthy” choices can isolate children from their peers and cause them to feel shame. Remember, no one food or meal defines our eating habits. If you have concerns about a student’s lunch talk to the parents separately in a non-judgemental manner.
- Allow all students to make their own decisions about *what* and *how much* to eat and drink from their lunches. There is no benefit to having children eat certain foods before others such as eating a sandwich before a cookie. Children eat better when they can pick from the available options in the order they want.

### References

1. Algoma Public Health. Healthy Living Resources for the Classroom 2017/2018: Healthy Eating Elementary (grades K-8). [cited 2019 July 22]. Available from: [www.algomapublichealth.com/media/2502/healthy-eating-elementary-2017-2018-hyperlinked-sept-2017-2.pdf](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/media/2502/healthy-eating-elementary-2017-2018-hyperlinked-sept-2017-2.pdf)
2. Ontario Dietitians in Public Health. Bright Bites: Tips for Teaching Nutrition. [cited 2019 July 22]. Available from: [brightbites.ca/tips-for-teaching-nutrition/](http://brightbites.ca/tips-for-teaching-nutrition/)
3. Ellyn Satter, Nutrition Education in the Schools, 2008. Retrieved from: [www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/03/Secrets-Appendix-H-School-Nutr-Ed.pdf](http://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/03/Secrets-Appendix-H-School-Nutr-Ed.pdf)
4. Healthy Schools BC. Teach Food First. 2023. Guiding Principles for Educators: Teaching About Food and Nutrition

## Health Education - GRADE 8

Grade 8 Health Education: Supporting Others		
Goal 1: Develop the understanding, skills, and confidences necessary to take action to improve health.		
Outcomes	Nutrition Indicator	Resources
<b>USC 8.1</b> <a href="#">Analyze and establish effective strategies of support for purposes of helping others increase health-enhancing behaviours.</a>	<b>Strategies in supporting others</b>	<b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Supporting Behavioural Change in Others</a> (p. 11) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Youth Engagement Toolkit (2018)</i>. Pan Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health. <a href="http://jcs-hcces.ca">jcs-hcces.ca</a></li> </ul>
	<b>Determinants of Health</b>	<b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Determinants of Health</a> (p. 13) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Della Hurdles to Health</i>. The Promoting Health Equity Project. <a href="http://www.youtube.com">www.youtube.com</a></li> <li><i>Let's Start a Conversation About Health...and Not Talk About Health Care at All</i>. Public Health Sudbury and Districts. <a href="http://www.youtube.com">www.youtube.com</a></li> </ul> <b>Sample Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Global Schools; Program; Shop til You Drop; Building Blocks for a Good Life; Respect the Water; Breaking the Cycle; Developing Rights; Shop Til You Drop</i>. [Search resource in] Resources for Rethinking. <a href="http://resources4rethinking.ca">resources4rethinking.ca</a></li> <li><i>Cook what you Love, Love what you Eat: a Food Justice Series with lesson plans</i>. <a href="http://foodshare.net">foodshare.net</a></li> </ul>
	<b>Developing and implementing SMART goals</b>	<b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Developing and Implementing SMART Goals</a> (p. 14)

## Grade 8 Health Education: Supporting Others

**Goal 1:** Develop the understanding, skills, and confidences necessary to take action to improve health.

Outcomes	Nutrition Indicator	Resources
<p><b>USC 8.1</b> <a href="#">Analyze and establish effective strategies of support for purposes of helping others increase health-enhancing behaviours.</a></p>	<p><b>Environments that impact health</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">The Built and Food Environments</a> (p.17)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Nutrition Resource Kit (Grade 9 Lesson Plans). Healthy Nutrition Environment Squad (p. 15-16).</i> Alberta Health Services. <a href="http://foodimpact.ca">foodimpact.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Nutrition Resource Kit (Grade 8 Lesson Plans). Quick Thinking in the Fast Food Line (p. 24-26).</i> Alberta Health Services. <a href="http://foodimpact.ca">foodimpact.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Paint Your Plate Lesson Plan Grade 8 – Taking Action.</i> Ontario Dietitians in Public Health: Bright Bites. <a href="http://brightbites.ca">brightbites.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Healthy Youth, Healthy Community. Building a Healthy Classroom and Healthy Living Lessons.</i> Learning to Give <a href="http://learningtogive.org">learningtogive.org</a></li> <li>• <i>Food Mapping: Where is the Food in my Community (p. 41).</i> Girls Action Foundation. Take Care Curriculum Guide. <a href="http://girlsactionfoundation.ca">girlsactionfoundation.ca</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Food Environment Assessment</a> p. 36</li> <li>• <i>Grocery Shopping.</i> FANLit. <a href="http://fanlit.org">fanlit.org</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Weight bias</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Weight Bias</a> (p. 18)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lesson Plan Ideas (Lessons 1-4).</i> Equity and Human Rights Commission <a href="http://equalityhumanrights.com">equalityhumanrights.com</a></li> <li>• <i>Stigma-Free Pledge.</i> Stigma-Free Society. <a href="http://stigmafreesociety.com">stigmafreesociety.com</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Food insecurity</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Food Insecurity</a> (p. 20)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Grocery Shopping.</i> FANLit. <a href="http://fanlit.org">fanlit.org</a></li> </ul>

## Grade 8 Health Education: Supporting Others

**Goal 1:** Develop the understanding, skills, and confidences necessary to take action to improve health.

Outcomes	Nutrition Indicator	Resources
<p><b>USC 8.2</b> <a href="#">Analyze how personal prejudices/biases, and habits of mind shape assumptions about family identities, structures, roles, and responsibilities.</a></p>	<p><b>Food skills, Culture, traditions and family meals</b></p>	<p><b>Information:</b> <a href="#">Food Skills, Traditions and Family Meals</a> (p. 22)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Eat Meals with Others.</i> Teach Nutrition by Dairy Farmers of Canada’s Registered Dietitians. <a href="#">dairyfarmersofcanada.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Cook More Often (4-9).</i> Teach Nutrition by Dairy Farmers of Canada’s Registered Dietitians. <a href="#">dairyfarmersofcanada.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Cooking &amp; Tasting Toolkit (Activities p. 14-24).</i> Food Share. <a href="#">foodshare.net</a></li> <li>• <i>Activity 3 – Food Traditions (p. 35).</i> Nourish Curriculum Guide. <a href="#">nourishlife.org</a></li> <li>• <i>The Stories our Food Tells Us (p. 43).</i> Girls Action Foundation. Take Care Curriculum Guide. <a href="#">girlsactionfoundation.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Bannock: More than Bread.</i> FANLit. <a href="#">fanlit.org</a></li> <li>• <i>Table Talk; Food Skills Expert.</i> PHE Canada. <a href="#">phecanada.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Interview a Community Member; Indigenous Agriculture: Intercropping; Pan de los muertos; The Edible School Yard Project.</i> <a href="#">edibleschoolyard.org</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Weight bias</b></p>	<p><b>Information:</b> <a href="#">Weight Bias</a> (p. 18)</p> <p><b>Classroom Sample Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fad Diet Detectives;</i> PHE Canada. <a href="#">phecanada.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Body Liberation Workshop Series.</i> FoodShare. <a href="#">foodshare.net</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Body image</b></p>	<p><b>Information:</b> <a href="#">Body Image</a> (p. 24), <a href="#">Opportunities and Barriers to Healthy Eating for Youth</a> (p. 29)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Body Image Lessons Grade 8.</i> Media Smarts. <a href="#">mediasmarts.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Dove Evolution.</i> Dove. <a href="#">youtube.com</a></li> <li>• <i>Grade 8 - Beyond Images (A Self-esteem and body-image curriculum).</i> National Eating Disorders Information Centre. <a href="#">beyondimages.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Confronting Comparisons to Build Body Confidence (Classroom Activities).</i> Amazing me. <a href="#">amazingmeselfesteem.com</a></li> </ul>

## Grade 8 Health Education: Supporting Others

**Goal 1:** Develop the understanding, skills, and confidences necessary to take action to improve health.

Outcomes	Nutrition Indicator	Resources
<b>USC 8.2</b> <a href="#">Analyze how personal prejudices/biases, and habits of mind shape assumptions about family identities, structures, roles, and responsibilities.</a>	<b>Body image (cont'd)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Digital Citizenship Curriculum</i>. Common Sense Education. <a href="https://commonsense.org">commonsense.org</a></li> <li><i>Everybody for Every Body</i>. FoodShare. <a href="https://foodshare.net">foodshare.net</a></li> </ul>
	<b>Determinants of health</b>	<i>See resources as listed in Determinants of Health section listed above.</i>
<b>USC 8.5</b> <a href="#">Assess how body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction and overreliance on appearance as a source of identity and self-esteem affects the quality of life of self and family.</a>	<b>Monitoring body size and growth in youth</b>	<b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Body Composition and Health Risks in Children and Youth</a> (p. 26)
	<b>Weight bias</b>	<b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Weight Bias</a> (p. 18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Weight Bias at Home and School</i>. Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health. <a href="https://youtube.com">youtube.com</a></li> </ul>
	<b>Evaluating nutrition information</b>	<b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Evaluating Nutrition Information</a> (p. 28) <b>Sample Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Nutrition Activities in Any Classroom. For Junior and Senior High. Activity Station: Food Detective</i> (p. 6-13). Alberta Health Services. <a href="https://albertahealthservices.ca">albertahealthservices.ca</a></li> <li><i>Authenticating Information – Resources for Teachers</i>. Media Smarts <a href="https://mediasmarts.ca">mediasmarts.ca</a></li> <li><i>Fad Diet Detectives</i>; PHE Canada. <a href="https://phecanada.ca">phecanada.ca</a></li> </ul>
	<b>Healthy eating practices</b>	<b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Opportunities and Barriers to Healthy Eating For Youth</a> (p. 29) <b>Sample Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Food Marketing. Media Awareness Learning Activity</i>. Action Schools BC. <a href="https://healthyschoolsbc.ca">healthyschoolsbc.ca</a></li> <li>Mindful Eating (4-9). Teach Nutrition by Dairy Farmers of Canada’s Registered Dietitians. <a href="https://dairyfarmersofcanada.ca">dairyfarmersofcanada.ca</a></li> <li><i>Grocery Shopping</i>. FANLit. <a href="https://fanlit.org">fanlit.org</a></li> <li><i>Food Skills Lessons</i>. FANLit. <a href="https://www.fanlit.org/kitchen-lessons">www.fanlit.org/kitchen-lessons</a></li> </ul>

## Grade 8 Health Education: Supporting Others

**Goal 1:** Develop the understanding, skills, and confidences necessary to take action to improve health.

Outcomes	Nutrition Indicator	Resources
<p><b>USC 8.5</b> <a href="#">Assess how body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction and overreliance on appearance as a source of identity and self-esteem affects the quality of life of self and family.</a></p>	<p><b>Body image</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Body Image</a> (p. 24)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Body Image and Media Influences.</i> Alberta Health Services. Mental Health Kit. <a href="http://albertahealthservices.ca">albertahealthservices.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Body Image: Gender Stereotype.</i> Alberta Health Services. Mental Health Kit, Grade 8. <a href="http://albertahealthservices.ca">albertahealthservices.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Put Your Best Face Forward.</i> Media Smarts. <a href="http://mediasmarts.ca">mediasmarts.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Grade 8: Body Image Basics, Celebrity Status, Onslaught.</i> National Eating Disorders Information Centre. Beyond Images <a href="http://beyondimages.ca">beyondimages.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Service Sparks: Beauty Campaign.</i> Learning to Live. <a href="http://learningtogive.org">learningtogive.org</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>USC 8.6</b> <a href="#">Examine and assess the concept of sustainability from many perspectives, and develop an understanding of its implications for the wellbeing of self, others, and the environment.</a></p>	<p><b>Sustainable food systems</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Sustainable Food Systems</a> (p. 32)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>AWAY: A Zero Waste Journey.</i> GrowNYC's Recycling Champions. <a href="http://vimeo.com">vimeo.com</a></li> <li>• <i>Activity 1: The Story of Food; Food and Ecosystems.</i> Nourish Curriculum <a href="http://nourishlife.org">nourishlife.org</a></li> <li>• <i>Farm Visit- A Vegetable &amp; Fruit Extension Activity.</i> Action Schools BC. <a href="http://healthyschoolsbc.ca">healthyschoolsbc.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Current Food Issues.</i> Saskatchewan Organic Directorate. <a href="http://foodmiles.saskorganic.com">foodmiles.saskorganic.com</a></li> <li>• <i>Food Sustainability Lessons.</i> FANLit. <a href="http://www.fanlit.org/food-environment-lessons-2">www.fanlit.org/food-environment-lessons-2</a></li> <li>• <i>Connecting Eating and the Environment; Adventures of the Banana; Homegrown Specialties.</i> PHE Canada. <a href="http://phecanada.ca">phecanada.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Exploring a Community Garden; The Environmental Debate Plate: Frittata and Salad; Farming and Family; Tasting the Seasons; Saving the Scraps; Food Waste;</i> The Edible School Yard Project. <a href="http://edibleschoolyard.org">edibleschoolyard.org</a></li> <li>• <i>What's the Story of your food.</i> Nourish, Food and Community: A Curriculum Guide. <a href="http://resources4rethinking.ca">resources4rethinking.ca</a></li> </ul>



## Grade 8 Health Education: Supporting Others

Goal 2: Make informed decisions based on health-related knowledge.

Outcomes	Nutrition Indicator	Resources
<p><b>DM 8.8</b> <a href="#">Appraise the role of “support” in making healthy decisions related to family roles and responsibilities, non-curable infections/ diseases, violence and abuse, body image, sustainability, and sexual health</a></p>	<p><b>Stages of behavioural change</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Stages of Change</a> (p. 34)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Building Healthy Relationships: Conflict Resolution.</i> Mental Health Kit Grade 8. Alberta Health Services. <a href="http://albertahealthservices.ca">albertahealthservices.ca</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Weight bias and healthy eating</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Weight Bias</a> (p. 18); <a href="#">Opportunities and Barriers to Healthy Eating in Youth</a> (p. 29)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lesson Plan Ideas (Lessons 1-4).</i> Equity and Human Rights Commission. <a href="http://equalityhumanrights.com">equalityhumanrights.com</a></li> <li>• <i>Stigma-Free Pledge.</i> Stigma Free Society. <a href="http://stigmafreesociety.com">stigmafreesociety.com</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Environments that impact health</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">The Built and Food Environments</a> (p.17)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>School Travel Planning 101.</i> Saskatchewan in Motion. <a href="http://saskatchewaninmotion.ca">saskatchewaninmotion.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Neighbourhood Walkability checklist.</i> Saskatchewan in Motion. <a href="http://saskatchewaninmotion.ca">saskatchewaninmotion.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Community Food Mapping.</i> Ophea. <a href="http://ophea.net">ophea.net</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Opportunities and Barriers to Healthy Eating</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Opportunities and Barriers to Healthy Eating For Youth</a> (p. 29)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Food and the media.</i> Fanlit. <a href="http://fanlit.org">fanlit.org</a></li> <li>• <i>Cost and Access Debate Plate:</i> Chili and Cornbread. <a href="http://edibleschoolyard.org">edibleschoolyard.org</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Body Image</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Body Image</a> (p. 24)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Grade 8: Be The Change</i> National Eating Disorders Information Centre. Beyond Images <a href="http://beyondimages.ca">beyondimages.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Exposing Gender Stereotypes Lesson.</i> Media Smarts. <a href="http://mediasmarts.ca">mediasmarts.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Nutrition Game (p. 47); What’s up with Food (p. 50).</i> Girls Action Foundation. Take Care Curriculum Guide. <a href="http://girlsactionfoundation.ca">girlsactionfoundation.ca</a></li> </ul>

Grade 8 Health Education: Supporting Others		
Goal 2: Make informed decisions based on health-related knowledge.		
Outcomes	Nutrition Indicator	Resources
<p><b>DM 8.9</b> <a href="#">Analyze the health opportunities and challenges, and establish “support others” personal goal statements, related to family roles and responsibilities, non-curable infections or diseases, violence and abuse, body image, sustainability, and sexual health.</a></p>	<p><b>Opportunities and barriers to healthy eating</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Opportunities and Barriers to Healthy Eating For Youth</a> (p. 29)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Healthy Living Lesson - Healthy Youth, Healthy Community (6-8)</i>. Learning to Give. <a href="http://learningtogive.org">learningtogive.org</a></li> <li>• <i>Interview a Community Member</i>. The Edible School Yard Project. <a href="http://edibleschoolyard.org">edibleschoolyard.org</a></li> <li>• <i>Table Talk</i>. PHE Canada. <a href="http://phecanada.ca">phecanada.ca</a></li> <li>• <i>Viewing with a critical eye</i>. OPHEA. <a href="http://ophea.net">ophea.net</a></li> </ul> <p><i>See lessons listed in Determinants of Health section above.</i></p>
	<p><b>Setting SMART goals</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Developing and Implementing SMART Goals</a> (p. 14)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Building a Healthy Classroom Lesson - Healthy Youth, Healthy Community (6-8)</i>. Learning to Give. <a href="http://learningtogive.org">learningtogive.org</a></li> </ul>

Grade 8 Health Education: Supporting Others		
Goal 3: Apply decisions that will improve personal health and/or the health of others.		
Outcomes	Nutrition indicator	Resources
<p><b>AP 8.10</b> <a href="#">Design, implement, &amp; evaluate three seven-day action plans that establish multiple supports for responsible health action related to family roles &amp; responsibilities, non-curable infections/diseases, violence and abuse, body image, sustainability, &amp; sexual health.</a></p>	<p><b>Supporting others’ nutrition goals</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">Supporting Health Behaviours in Others</a> (p. 11); <a href="#">Developing and Implementing SMART Goals</a> (p. 14)</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Caring for Community Health Lesson – Healthy Youth, Healthy Community (6-8)</i>. Learning to Give. <a href="http://learningtogive.org">learningtogive.org</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Setting nutrition goals</b></p>	<p><b>Background Information:</b> <a href="#">SMART Goals</a> (p. 14); <a href="#">Opportunities &amp; Barriers to Healthy Eating For Youth</a> (p. 29 )</p> <p><b>Sample Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What my Community Needs Lesson – Healthy Youth, Healthy Community (6-8)</i>. Learning to Give. <a href="http://learningtogive.org">learningtogive.org</a></li> </ul>

## Supporting Behavioural Change in Others

Helping others to be healthy is important in improving and protecting the health of our community. We can empower each other to make healthier choices to reduce our risk for disease and injury, and improve our quality of life. This process is called *health promotion*.

The World Health Organization defines health promotion as: “The process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. It moves beyond a focus on individual behaviour towards a wide range of social and environmental interventions (1).” The social determinants of health are factors that impact health, such as education, social supports, and income.

Health promotion initiatives may address some of the social determinants with the aim to change risk factors for health. There are many ways to promote the health of others; however, the following are noted as the international strategies (2, 3):

- **Develop Personal Skills:** For many years we have been aware that we are able to reduce our risk of disease and injury by making healthy choices in our daily lives. It is important to learn how to be healthy and to choose these options most often. Schools can help students develop personal skills by making accurate health information available and by offering opportunities to practice these skills.
- **Strengthen Community Actions:** Working together to promote and support the health of each other is an important part of health promotion. Drawing on each other’s strengths, all members can participate by providing help and social support while learning together. It is important to work together to set priorities, make decisions, plan and implement strategies to improve the health of all people in the group regardless of background or social status. As we empower each other we are able to create supportive environments and have control of our own endeavours and destinies. Consider partnering with organizations outside of the school community such as health professionals, food security groups and cultural organizations.
- **Create Supportive Environments:** Our health is deeply connected to the environments in which we live, learn, work and play. These environments can make it easier or more difficult to be healthy. Promoting health can include or modifying the environments so that healthy decisions are more readily available to large populations. It is also important to consider the conservation of natural resources as a global responsibility. For examples of how schools can create supportive environments, refer to [The Built and Food Environments](#) (page 17).
- **Build Healthy Public Policy:** Health promotion goes beyond health care and puts health on the agenda of decision makers in all sectors. Health promotion policies are a way to improve the health of a large group of people. Policies are ways to guide our actions and decisions. Policies are made by individuals, families, schools, organizations and governments (4). For examples, families may have policies surrounding cell phone use, stores have return policies and schools

have policies that describe the ways they expect children to behave. Policies can be used to complement health promotion approaches. For example, healthy food policies within schools can guide the type of foods and beverages served and sold in schools. Offering healthy food more often than unhealthy food can make the healthy choice the easier choice

In light of the health promotion role schools have, the [Comprehensive School Community Health framework](#) was developed as a way to address school community health in a planned, integrated and holistic way (5). The internationally recognized model promotes health through four integrated pillars: high-quality teaching and learning; safe and healthy physical and social environments; family and community engagement; and effective policy. Using the CSCH framework to promote health can improve student learning, respond to student needs, support healthy decision making, and improve engagement of families and community.

For more information about CSCH see [OPHEA's Healthy Schools Healthy Communities: How you can Make a Difference](#) video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDXeq5S\\_J8A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDXeq5S_J8A).

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## Determinants of Health

The determinants of health (DOH) are physical, social, and individual factors that influence the health of people and communities. The primary factors that influence our health are not medical treatments or lifestyle choices, but rather our living conditions (1). The DOH are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age (2).

The determinants of health can include (3):

- Income and social status
- Social support networks
- Employment/working conditions
- Social environments
- Physical environments
- Healthy child development
- Biology and genetic endowment
- Health services
- Gender
- Culture
- Personal health practices and coping skills

Although individual lifestyle choices affect health outcomes, it is important to understand that other factors have an impact on health as well (3). For example, decisions about what foods to eat and how much to eat are not simply matters of personal choice, but also of circumstances and environments. Below is a story looking at one of the determinants of health, income, and how it can affect health and food choices.

- The Smith's family refrigerator is broken.
- Although the family is able to pay rent, they do not have enough money to fix the refrigerator.
- Because they cannot store perishable items with a broken refrigerator, the family does not purchase many dairy products, vegetables and fruit, or meat.
- Since these foods are not purchased, their diets may lack key nutrients such as protein, carbohydrates, healthy fat, fibre, and many vitamins and minerals.
- If their diets lack these nutrients, they have an increased chance of feeling fatigued, being sick, developing chronic diseases, and not being able to learn or work well during the day.
- If they are not able to perform well during the day the children may fall behind in school and the parents may struggle at work or lose their jobs.
- If the parents are unable to work enough, there will be less money to spend on food, rent or to fix the refrigerator.
- This stressful situation impacts the health of the family.

Even though individuals are educated about healthy eating and know what to eat for health, research shows that knowledge is not enough to translate into behaviour change (4). The best thing we can do to support others to make healthy food choices is to make those choices more accessible to all. (See Backgrounders on the [Built and Food Environments](#) p. 17 and [Food Insecurity p.20](#)).

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## Developing and Implementing SMART Goals

Setting goals is an important skill to be able to transform ideas into reality. Goals provide a long-term vision for success and motivation. It is important to support students in the process of setting and implementing their goals. One acronym that is often used when setting goals is SMART, which stands for:

- **Specific:** Being specific about what is to be accomplished is important to be able to actually implement the goal. For example, instead of saying, “I want to eat better”, a more specific goal would be “I will eat more vegetables”.
- **Measurable:** If you can measure your goal, you will know when you have achieved it. It is important to be able to track progress. Rather than saying “I will eat more vegetables,” try “I will eat vegetables at both lunch and supper at least 3 times a week.”
- **Attainable:** Encourage students to find goals that are within their ability and skills. Discuss how to deal with barriers that might get in the way of achieving goals. If the goal is to eat more vegetables, are vegetables readily available or are there barriers to accessing vegetables. Some goals will require support from trusted family and friends. When students develop goals, ask them if they will require help from others. For example, a student may need parents to purchase more vegetables. If this is not possible, perhaps the goal could be altered to include actions over which the student has control, for e.g., if the school has a snack or lunch program, eat vegetables that are offered, or choose a new goal, such as choosing white milk instead of chocolate milk at lunch.
- **Realistic:** Encourage students to develop goals that they are willing and able to work towards. Suggest students choose small, attainable goals, which are easier to track and provide ongoing reinforcement rather than choosing one large goal. Remind students to celebrate small successes to keep motivated.
- **Time-based:** Students need to set specific deadlines for starting and completing their goals. For example, “I will eat vegetables both at lunch and supper at least 3 days a week for 2 weeks.”

Students may adjust goals if needed. Goal setting is a chance to learn about oneself and how to handle challenges.

People often start a program to make change, but then struggle to keep with it. Students could use these ideas to help stay on track:

- Write down a list of benefits of achieving goals.
- Identify challenges and make a plan for how to deal with them, e.g. If the goal is to eat more vegetables but the school doesn’t offer many, be sure to pack a lunch.
- Communicate goals to trusted friends and supportive family.

The middle years can be a time of anxiety for students who experience body changes as they enter adolescence. In response they may want to alter their body shape or size, such as weight loss, or increase muscle mass. Because these actions can lead to unhealthy behaviours, it could be beneficial to encourage students to develop healthy body image SMART goals. An example is below:

- **Specific:** I will appreciate my body for all it does
- **Measurable:** Every time I think of or say something negative about my body I will list one thing my body does for me and one thing I like about my body.
- **Attainable:** If I having a hard time thinking of something positive to say I will ask someone I trust to help me, or I will make a list at a time when I am feeling positive, and draw on that list when I need it.
- **Realistic:** Because this may be a new process for students, it can be helpful for them to have a list of things they appreciate about their bodies. If they are worried about others seeing their list, think brainstorm ways they can protect it.
- **Time-based:** For the next three weeks, every time I think of or say something negative about my body, I will list one thing my body does for me and one thing I like about my body.

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## The Built and Food Environments

Research has shown that the physical environments in which we live, learn, work and play, can improve or worsen our health. Often referred to as the built environment, these areas can be designed and built to make the healthy choice the easy choice, and in doing so, support health enhancing behaviours. For example, communities with walking and bike paths, equipment in parks and easy access to recreation facilities, help to support physical activity. Although there are many factors impacting what people eat, having easy access to healthy food and little access to unhealthy food can help people eat healthfully. Frequently, our built environments, which include “power walls” filled with vending machines and miles of fast food restaurants, encourage people to choose unhealthy food. These environments increase the risk for poor health. Policies which control where fast food restaurants can be built, or what types of foods and beverages can be sold in a vending machine or within an organization, can help to reduce health risks.

### **School communities can help to support the health of students, staff and families by creating healthy environments:**

- Offer mostly healthy foods and avoid providing unhealthy foods for meal and snack programs, in canteens, and at special events. [Healthy Foods for my School and Planning Healthy Menus for my School: Nutrition Standards for Saskatchewan Schools](#), are resources to help select healthy food options.
- Motivate students with [non-food rewards](#). For example, offer pencils or erasers for rewards or organize activity breaks or unscheduled free time.
- Consider creating a community [garden](#) within the school grounds or starting a garden tower indoors so that students are aware of how food is grown. For more information contact your local dietitian.
- Encourage [physical activity both inside and outside](#) of the classroom. Offer students ideas of games to play during scheduled breaks and provide opportunity for movement during classroom lessons.
- Investigate how students and staff [travel to school](#). Partner with the community, families and students to identify ways to make walking or biking to school safer and easier.

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## Weight Bias

Weight bias refers to negative attitudes towards people due to their weight. These negative attitudes result in stereotypes, prejudice and unfair treatment towards these people. Weight bias can be expressed in multiple forms, such as name-calling, teasing, physical aggression, cyber bullying, rumors, and social exclusion (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8). Not only can this be embarrassing for a child or youth, it can also have serious consequences on their physical, social and psychological health (4, 5, 8). Weight bias towards children and youth most often occurs at school and at home (5, 8).

### Why does weight bias happen?

Weight bias occurs because we live in a culture where there is a perception that being thin is desirable (but not *too* thin, because these people may be stigmatized as well) (1). Our culture also tends to believe that people are responsible for their life situation and, “get what they deserve.” Despite research suggesting that body weight is determined by a complex interaction of genetic, biological and environmental factors, most people believe that weight gain or loss is under personal control (2,3).

We are exposed to misleading messages about weight from various means such as television, movies, books, magazines, social media and websites. A consequence of these messages is that it is thought to be socially acceptable to judge people’s characters, personalities and behaviours based on weight. When family members, friends, and education professionals reinforce these false messages, individuals are stigmatized (1).

### How does weight bias affect students?

Students who experience teasing or discrimination because of their weight can have low self-esteem, poor body image, and are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety (1, 5, 8). These students are also more socially isolated, less likely to be chosen as friends, and more likely to engage in suicidal thoughts and behaviours (5, 8). Children and youth who experience weight biases are more likely to try unhealthy weight control measures, binge eat, and avoid physical activities (4, 5, 8). Research shows that children and youth who have been victimized because of their weight report missing more days of school, and experiencing lower expectations by their teachers, which can result in poorer academic performance (4, 6, 7, 8).

### Taking Action

All people deserve safety, respect, and acceptance in their community and classroom. Just as we should not tolerate racial or gender bias toward others, we should not tolerate weight bias (1). If you witness weight bias occurring in your school, intervene right away. To learn how to address weight bias within your classroom and school, refer to the resources found here: [Weight Bias at Home & School](#)

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## Food Insecurity

Household food insecurity is defined as, “the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints (1).” It affects both short and long term health of individuals. Children from food insecure households are more likely to have poor physical and mental health, are more likely to go to the hospital, and have poorer academic performance and cognitive outcomes in later life (2, 3)

The experience of household food insecurity can include (1):

- anxiety and concerns about running out of food before there is money to buy more,
- anxiety, embarrassment and fear of having to ask friends or family for food or money for food, or go to a charitable organization (like a food bank or breakfast program),
- the inability to afford a balanced nutritious diet,
- going hungry,
- missing meals, and in extreme cases,
- not eating for a whole day because of a lack of food and money for food.

Immediate relief, like food banks and meal programs, are important supports for people who are hungry and can't afford their next meal, but they do not provide long term solutions for food security.

Programs designed to increase food skills, like meal planning, budgeting, cooking and gardening, can promote positive mental health and help to increase vegetable and fruit consumption, but do not decrease food insecurity (8). Research shows that adults in food *insecure* households do *not* have poorer food skills than those in food secure households (4). A lack of food skills is not the reason for food insecurity, so improving food skills through cooking classes, community kitchens or gardening will not fix the problem (4). Improving food skills does not address the root cause of the problem, which is that many people do not have enough money for food.

Food insecurity can be reduced through policies that improve financial circumstances for low income households such as (5):

- **increased minimum wage** to reflect a living wage, which is the amount needed to meet all basic needs so individuals can contribute to their communities in meaningful ways, and
- **guaranteed annual income**, similar to the guaranteed income programs that currently existing for seniors, but for all poor Canadians (6). A guaranteed annual income could lead to significant savings in the health system, and likely savings to social services and justice systems (6,7). Canada has already experimented with a Guaranteed Annual Income in the town of Dauphin, Manitoba between 1974-1979 with significant success (7,8).

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## Food Skills, Traditions and Family Meals

### Food Skills

When youth are involved in growing food, meal planning, grocery shopping, and food preparation, it encourages healthy habits that can last a lifetime (1). Food skills can be learned in the classroom, in the community and at home. It can be important to find different opportunities for youth to learn these skills and to put them into practice. The more confident youth are with food skills, the more likely they will be to continue on with these healthy habits as they become adults.

### Family Tradition

Mealtimes provide opportunities for parents to teach food preparation skills, enjoy traditional foods, and model healthy eating habits. Mealtimes also help to instill a sense of belonging in children and provide a way to share family values and traditions (2). Family mealtimes help families to bond by sharing stories, discussing the day's events, and making plans together. Memories and traditions formed during mealtimes stay with children for the rest of their lives.

### Family Meals

#### *Improve Diet Quality*

Eating meals with others has the potential to impact the health and well-being of children and adolescents (3, 4) providing both nutritional and non-nutritional benefits.

Families, who eat together, eat better. Studies show that eating as a family improves the type and variety of food children and adolescents eat, resulting in better food and nutrient intakes (5). When families eat together they tend to consume more vegetables, fruit and milk products and less fried foods and soft drinks (2, 5). As a result, children and adolescents tend to have higher intakes of fibre, calcium, iron, folate, and vitamins B6, B12, C and E in their diets (3).

Research has also demonstrated that children and adolescents who eat together with their families are less likely to be overweight, obese, or to develop disordered eating patterns (3, 5).

Family mealtimes provide opportunities to introduce children to new foods. Serving new foods with familiar ones will help children feel more comfortable trying them; this can lead to children accepting a wider variety of foods.

#### *Lead to Better Grades and Skill Development*

Children who eat together with their families on a regular basis are more engaged and learn better in school, and also have positive views of their personal futures (5). Students who eat with their families are more likely to have healthy eating patterns including adequate amounts of vegetables, fruit, protein, and fibre. Studies show that students who eat healthily do better on literacy tests than those who eat processed foods containing high amounts of salt and saturated fat (6).

## ***Help with Better Communication and Lead to Less Risky Behaviours***

Family mealtimes encourage conversation and interaction, which improve a child’s vocabulary and communication skills. Children who communicate better have fewer behavioural and social problems (3, 5). Children and youth who eat with their families at least once a day are less likely to smoke, drink, use drugs, get into serious fights, engage in sexual activity at an early age, or attempt suicide (3, 5, 7).

### **Call to Action**

Role modeling healthy behaviour, at home and at school, can have a positive influence and support children to develop healthy habits.

- Encourage students to talk to their parents or caregivers about having meals together.
- Encourage students to research and share some of their family food traditions.
- Support students by providing opportunities for them to learn a variety of food skills such as menu planning, meal preparation and gardening.

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## Body image

Body image is a term that describes how we see our own body and how we feel about our body. It is the mental picture we have that includes our thoughts, feelings, judgments and awareness of our body.

Self-esteem is the opinion you have of yourself, which can include body image, but also includes beliefs about the whole person, not just the body (1).

Physical and emotional changes that occur during adolescence leave youth vulnerable to messages about their bodies from the media, family and peers. At the same time, our present culture is bombarded with messages which place more value on some body sizes, shapes and looks than others. The school environment and community can assist youth in creating and maintaining healthy body images in many ways.

### Effective and ineffective strategies for promoting a positive body image:

- Teach students critical-thinking skills to help them to identify and resist cultural messages that could promote negative body images. Media images of unrealistic body sizes and shapes, along with comments from family, friends, role models and significant adults about weight, can all influence an individual's body image and can in turn increase the risk of unhealthy dieting behaviours. Having images of various healthy body shapes and sizes visible in the school environment can help to normalize and celebrate all body shapes and sizes.
- Words and actions of adult role models, such as teachers and coaches, can impact a student's body image. Avoid using statements that are focused on body sizes, weight loss or diets such as, "low carb diet," or "clean eating."
- Talking about healthy eating and physical activity for health benefits without mentioning weight, size and shape can promote a positive body image in youth. Examine your own values and beliefs about body size and weight.
- Do not teach about eating disorders or disordered eating habits. Research has shown that teaching students about eating disorders is not only ineffective in preventing these conditions, but it can also increase the risk of a child developing one by glamorizing dangerous behaviours and thoughts (2). Instead, teach students about healthy habits, media literacy, and coping strategies.
- Do not teach about body image and nutrition at the same time.
- Make time and space for meals at school. Discourage activities which restrict or glamourize unhealthy eating habits such as "starve-a-thons" or eating contests.
- Have policies in place that ban teasing or bullying about physical appearance.

*For more information about how to integrate healthy body image into classroom activities, policies and programs:*

- Beyond Images Webinar: Weaving Body Image Into the Classroom [www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8U5cDzx8UQ&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8U5cDzx8UQ&feature=youtu.be) and
- Beyond Images Webinar - Body Image in the Classroom [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Affzx9i9dL0&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Affzx9i9dL0&feature=youtu.be)



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## Body Composition and Health Risks in Youth

### Weighing and measuring students in schools

Measuring children and youth within the school setting can be more harmful than beneficial. Children and youth are often teased about their size and shape. Measuring weight or body composition at school can increase the amount of teasing children may already be receiving. Regardless of their size or shape, children and youth may be pressured to try harmful diets. Body composition can influence health, but research has shown that shaming people for their size does not improve their health (1).

All students need to be physically active, eat well, and have positive mental health regardless of their size and shape. It is important to be supportive of all children and youth by keeping the focus **on** health and wellness and **off** size and shape.

There are a number of measures that can be used to estimate body composition in relation to health risks.

### **BMI for Age**

BMI (Body Mass Index) for Age is the recommended way for health care providers to assess growth and estimate body composition in children. Research has linked childhood BMI to health quality in adulthood (2). The calculation below is used to determine BMI.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight in kilograms}}{\text{height in metres}^2}$$

BMI for children and youth **MUST** be interpreted differently than BMI for adults. Because children and youth are growing and developing, their body composition changes frequently. As a result, **BMI for children and youth MUST be interpreted by using the appropriate BMI for Age charts and NOT adult BMI charts.** When health care providers assess growth, several measurements over a period of time are used instead of one measurement at one point in time.

### **Skin fold thickness measurements**

Skin fold thickness measurements are not recommended for use in schools and fitness facilities. There is a **high potential for error** due to the difficulty in obtaining accurate measurements. Most importantly, skin fold calipers measure subcutaneous fat (fat that is found under the skin). Subcutaneous fat, although still part of overall weight, is not the most concerning fat for health. Visceral fat (fat stored in the abdomen), found close to internal organs, is the type of fat that is associated with health risks and often cannot be measured using skin fold measurements (3).

**Regardless of the technique used, body composition should only be measured and used by a trained healthcare provider as part of a total health assessment to accurately evaluate disease risk.**

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## Evaluating Nutrition Information

We often get nutrition information from the internet, through social media, and on websites. It is hard to know which source is the best. It is important to inform students of ways to ensure information from a website can be trusted.

Below are a few tips when looking for health information online:

### 1. Who hosts the website?

- Information from government authorities such as Health Canada, health authorities, or from national charities such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, or Diabetes Canada, is reliable.
- Be wary of websites advertising or selling things that are supposed to improve your health. Many of these companies include false or misleading scientific claims to encourage you to buy their product.

### 2. Is the information reliable?

- Check the author's credentials. Not all information is written by qualified health professional. There are many phony health professionals making false claims on the Internet. Dietitians are the trusted source for nutrition information.
- Health information should be unbiased and based on solid evidence. The author should refer to and provide the specific links to this evidence.
- Some qualified health professionals may reference poor scientific studies with misleading information. It can be important to take a closer look at the articles backing up their claims.

### 3. When was the information written?

- Look for websites with current health information. The date of the information is often at the bottom of the page. Look for information from the last 5 to 10 years.

### 4. Does the website offer quick and easy solutions to your health problems?

- Be careful of health information that claims that one pill or food will cure a lot of different illnesses.
- Be cautious of articles that try to make people fearful or recommends therapies which produce amazing or 'miracle' cures. Look for other reliable websites to see if they provide the same information.
- Talk with a trusted health care professional about what you learn online before making any changes in your health care or eating plan.

## Opportunities and Barriers to Healthy Eating for Youth

\*Food = food and drinks

At a first glance, what determines youths' eating behaviour appears to be purely a matter of personal choice, but research shows there are so many other factors that come into play (9). These factors can include: what is available to them at school and in their community, income and the cost of food, what foods and diets have been most heavily marketed to them, cultural food norms, pressures to be a certain body size, busy schedules and convenience, and so much more (9).

When healthy food options are more available, affordable, accessible, and culturally appropriate, youth will be more likely to choose them. When youth have few healthy food options, are the targets for unhealthy food marketing, and are regularly offered unhealthy options, they often end up choosing those which are high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fat.

### Personal Factors

- **Hunger and Fullness** - We are born with the ability to feel hunger and fullness; however, many things can interfere with this as we age, such as: irregular meal patterns, adults' expectation for youth to eat a certain amount of food, and rewarding youth with food (e.g. candy for getting a question right, etc.).
- **Food Preferences** – We are born with innate preferences for sweet and aversions for bitter taste (10). There are also social and cultural norms that help to shape our food preferences, including what we learn from family, friends, and our culture. The foods that taste the best to, are most readily available, comfort us, and are most heavily marketed, often become what we like best.
- **Emotions** - Over eating, under eating or eating different foods can happen in response to different emotions. The association between emotion and food is normal, but it can be problematic if it becomes the usual way to deal with emotions.
- **Nutritional Knowledge and Perceptions of Healthy Eating** – Perceptions about healthy eating are shaped by our social surroundings and can change over time. Youth are often able to show a general understanding of the connections between food choice and health, however, in these age groups, knowledge often does not influence food choice as much as other factors (5).
- **Self-esteem and Body Image** - Media images of unrealistic body sizes and shapes, along with comments from family, friends, and role models about weight and dieting can influence youths' body image and self-esteem. This in turn can increase the risk of unhealthy dieting behaviours. Talking about healthy eating and physical activity for health benefits without focusing on weight, size and shape can promote a positive body image in children and youth. See [weight bias](#) backgrounder on p. 18 for more.

### Factors at Home

Influences on eating habits at home can include whether families have:

- **enough income** to be able to afford to buy enough acceptable, culturally appropriate and nutritious foods. The most important barrier to healthy eating is inadequate income (10).

- **access** to healthy foods in the community or transportation to get it somewhere else. Neighbourhoods where there is limited access to affordable nutritious food but easy access to unhealthy food make it difficult for families to purchase healthy food.
- **food skills** such as grocery shopping, being able to plan and prepare healthy and tasty meals, gardening and preserving.
- **enough time** to grocery shop, plan, and prepare a meal with busy work schedules, extracurricular activities and responsibilities.
- **proper kitchen equipment**, such as a stove and refrigerator, to prepare and store healthy foods.
- **regular family meals**. Youth who participate in family meals on a regular basis tend to eat better than those who do not.
- **cultural eating practices**. Culture can influence what foods are selected, how they are prepared and served, and how and when foods are eaten. Traditional food practices are often associated with healthier eating, more affordability and a passing on of cultural knowledge.
- **multiple stressors** such as difficulty paying rent, finding a place to live, finding employment, or caring for ill family members often take priority over healthy eating.
- **specific beliefs** such as vegetarianism, religious beliefs, or beliefs around what healthy eating is can all impact the types of foods that are consumed in the household.

### Factors outside the Home

**Schools, community and surrounding area** - When healthy foods are more accessible, more affordable and better advertised in and around the school, this makes it more likely youth will eat them (4). When students have greater access to unhealthy foods, such as fast-food restaurants and convenience stores nearby or highly processed foods served and sold right in the school, this makes it harder for them to make healthy choices.

It is also important for adults not to criticise or judge youth based on the types or amounts of food they consume, as this can actually lead to poorer eating habits, not better (4, 5, 6).

**Involvement in different types of physical activities** - Participation in sports and other physical activities can influence youths' eating habits. As they learn about the role of healthy eating and exercise, youth may choose healthier food options (if they are available). In addition, sports such as wrestling, football, gymnastics and dance, in which body size plays a role, also impact youths' eating habits.

Recreation facilities provide a space for physical activity, but unhealthy food choices are often readily available (7). Also, many unhealthy foods such as energy drinks, soft drinks and fast food are marketed by professional athletes or promoted by some coaches, and can influence youth eating habits.

**Public Policy** – policies at the local, regional and national level can have a significant impact on our collective food choices and this can act as determinants of healthy eating. Effective policies can help ensure our environments can produce enough food to eat, can guide Canadians towards healthier food choices without thinking much about it, and can help ensure people can afford the foods they need (3).

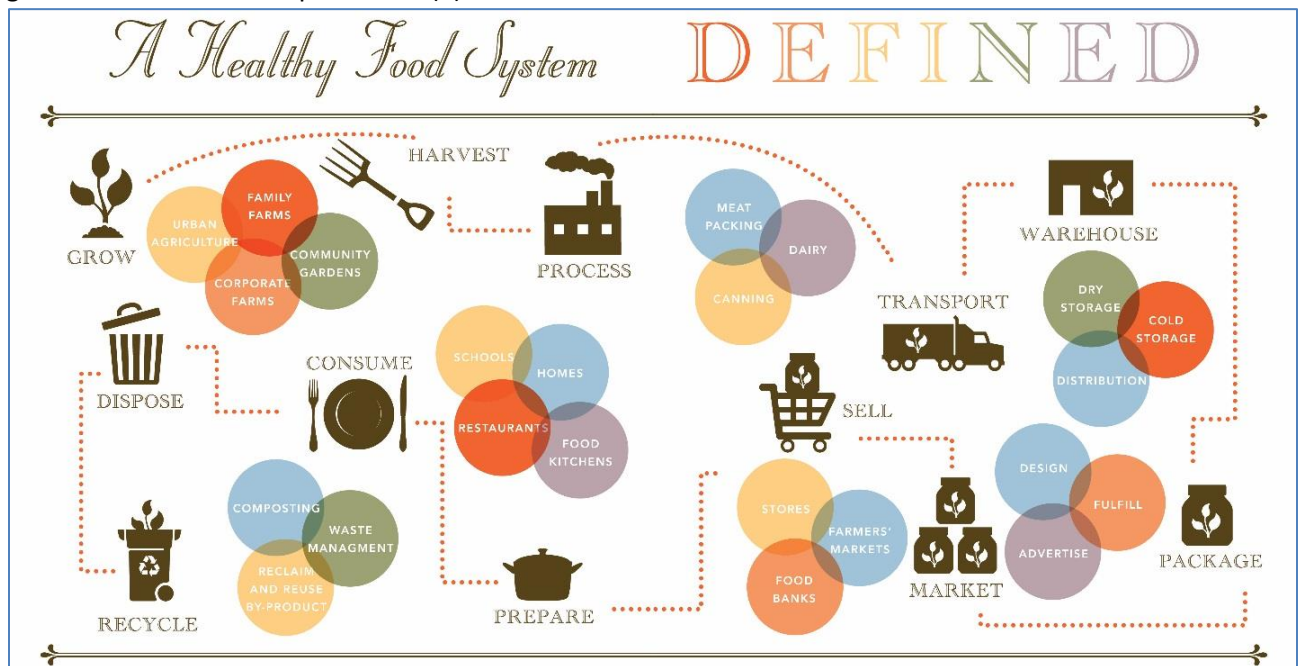
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## Sustainable Food Systems

### Healthy Sustainable Food Systems

A food system considers how food is grown, harvested, processed, distributed, marketed, consumed and disposed of. The economic, ecological and social value of food extends beyond its nutritional value. “A sustainable food system is a food system that delivers food and nutrition security for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised” (1).



[www.tablematters.ca/tm-projects/food-system-defined/](http://www.tablematters.ca/tm-projects/food-system-defined/)

### Food Production

Food production includes growing, harvesting and packing of food. A healthy food system considers practices that have the most beneficial impact on the environment.

### Food Processing and Distribution

Most food needs to be processed in some way to be edible. This might be milling wheat to make flour or using food ingredients to create new food products such as tomato sauce. A healthy food system considers the environmental effects of how food is processed. It is important to limit the amount of nonrenewable resources used in processing a food. Generally, the more processed a food is, the less healthy it is for our bodies. Also, highly processed foods often use more packaging than less processed foods, and it is important to recognize the impact packaging has on the environment. Healthy food systems consider and aim to minimize the amount of packaging needed for food processing, preservation, transportation, distribution and sale.



## Food Loss and Waste

A recent study suggests that roughly 1/3 of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, which amounts to about 1.3 billion tons per year (2). Food loss refers to the food that is lost in production, during processing, distribution and storage, in stores and food service operations, and at home. Food waste is the loss that occurs at the end of the food chain. The majority of this would be the food that is thrown out due to spoilage, food that does not meet commercial aesthetic standards, and excess food prepared (3).

## Sustainable Diets

Sustainable Diets are those diets with low environmental impacts, which contribute to food and nutrition security and to a healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources (4).

What are some ways schools can apply this information?

- Use local foods in school canteens and programs when they are in season.
- Promote the use of foods that are minimally packaged and processed.
- Ban one time use plastic bottles and encourage the use of reusable beverage containers.
- Use signage to direct people to water fountains and fill stations.
- Provide healthy food choices by focusing on plant based protein alternatives, such as lentils, beans, etc.
- Have composting and recycling programs.
- Plant a school garden to help students understand where food comes from.
- Incorporate information about sustainable food systems into the classroom.
- Visit a local farm, community garden or farmer`s market.
- Have the class investigate related topics, such as Community Supported Agriculture, urban agriculture, and community food security.

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## Stages of Change

When supporting others and yourself to make health decisions that require behaviour changes, it is important to recognize that making a change is a process. Based on the Stages of Change Theory, people move through a series of five stages when they are changing behaviours. The amount of time spent in each stage varies, and less than 20% of a group is ready for action at any given stage (1,2).

Encourage students to support others regardless of the specific stage the person might be in. Instead of focusing on the end result, students can encourage others to reflect on the types of decisions they make. For example, when students are making health goals, discourage negative body talk and support the idea of the wonderful things the human body is capable of and the joy that comes with making healthy decisions. By following this process, the potential gains (e.g., health, self-worth) with establishing health and body image goals may encourage participation by students rather than complete behaviour changes.

Supporting others in making healthy decisions is not synonymous with telling them what to do. Change is a process that evolves over time by progressing through stages and a role that students can play is helping others move from one stage to the next. For example, students can encourage each other, join others in their health decisions or model healthy choices.

### ***The stages of change are:***

1. Pre-contemplation (not ready to make changes)
2. Contemplation (thinking about making changes)
3. Preparation (starting to get ready to make a change)
4. Action (making changes within past 6 month)
5. Maintenance (made changes for at least 6 months) (1, 2)

### **Supporting Students to Make Healthy Decisions**

Educators can support students to make healthy changes. It is important for students to know where to go when they have questions or need support. Encourage students to talk to someone they trust at school or home, or contact their [local public health offices](#) if they have specific health questions. Support has the aim of making it easier for students to make and maintain desired changes. This may involve creating or providing the environment, circumstances, equipment, information, and the logistical and psychological help that make behaviour change possible. To continue with the behaviour once the student has made a change, new skills may need to be developed in order to maintain the new behaviour. (3) See backgrounder [Evaluating Nutrition Information](#) on page 28 for more on accessing quality health information.

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## Canada's Food Guide – 2019

Canada's Food Guide has provided Canadians with healthy eating recommendations since the 1940's. Over the years, the Food Guide provided guidance around the types and amounts of foods to eat for health. Rather than identifying the specific amounts of foods to consume each day, the healthy eating recommendations for the 2019 version of the Guide provide key messages in choosing healthy foods and eating habits.

### Canada's Food Guide Healthy Eating Recommendations

#### Healthy Food Choices

Make it a habit to eat a variety of healthy foods each day.

- **Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods.** Choose protein foods that come from plants more often. Protein foods include legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu, fortified soy beverage, fish, shellfish, eggs, poultry, lean meat, lower fat milk, lower fat yogurt and cheeses lower in fat and sodium. Choose foods with healthy fats instead of saturated fat.
- **Limit highly processed foods. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts.** Prepare meals and snacks using ingredients that have little to no added sodium, sugars or saturated fat. Choose healthier menu options when eating out
- **Make water your drink of choice.** Replace sugary drinks with water. Replacing sugary drinks with water will help reduce the amount of sugars you drink.
- **Use food labels.** Food labels provide information you can use to make informed choices about foods and drinks at the grocery store and at home.
- **Be aware that food marketing can influence your choices.** Food marketing is advertising that promotes the sale of certain food or food products. Many foods and drinks that are marketed can contribute too much sodium, sugars or saturated fat to our eating patterns.

#### Healthy Eating Habits

Healthy eating is more than the foods you eat. It is also about where, when, why and how you eat.

- **Be mindful of your eating habits,** taking time to eat and noticing when you are hungry and when you are full.
- **Cook more often.** Cooking more often can help you develop healthy eating habits. You can cook more often by planning what you eat and involving others in planning and preparing meals.
- **Enjoy your food.** Enjoying your food is part of healthy eating. Enjoy the taste of your food and the many food-related activities that go along with eating. This includes enjoying culture and food traditions.
- **Eat meals with others.** Enjoying healthy foods with family, friends, or neighbours is a great way to enjoy quality time together, share food traditions, across generations and cultures, and explore new healthy foods that you might not normally try.

Several tips, resources and recipes to implement Canada’s Food Guide recommendations into daily habits are available at [food-guide.canada.ca/en](https://food-guide.canada.ca/en)

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# Activities

## Food Environment Assessment

**Purpose:** To help identify the influence the environment has on our food choices.

There are many reasons why we choose to eat the foods we do. Some are more obvious like hunger and taste, while others can be less obvious invitations to eat like smells of food nearby, advertising and marketing, or just because the food was there. This activity will help students identify some of the reasons we eat what we eat and the role the environment may have on our food choices.

**See next page for worksheet....**

**Take Home Assignment – Fill out the following chart:**

	<b>What did you feel? Experience?</b>	<b>Did it have an influence on what you ate? Bought?</b>	<b>How did that influence what you ate? Bought?</b>
1. How many food advertisements did you see during your favourite TV show or in a magazine?			
2. On your way home from school, count the number of places that you pass that sells food.			
3. How many steps does it take to get from the TV, computer, or desk at work to get something to eat?			
4. Notice how much you eat from a large bulk package versus a smaller package of food?			
5. Notice how much food you would put on a large plate versus a small plate or beverages in glasses?			
6. Do you often buy foods in meal deals, or because of a sale or special offer (e.g. 3 for \$10)?			
7. How do you feel when you see or smell food? (e.g. vending machine right by the school gym, desk with candies in a dish, passing by and smelling the KFC at lunch time).			

Adapted from: Craving Change. 2012. [www.cravingchange.ca](http://www.cravingchange.ca) and Wansink, B. (n.d.) [mindlesseating.org/index.php](http://mindlesseating.org/index.php).