

# EATING HABITS

## Interventions in schools

During their schooling, young people experience a variety of situations related to various issues of health and well-being. On this sheet, you will find specific intervention guidelines that have been developed to support the work of stakeholders who plan and implement health promotion and prevention actions.

To see all the health-related recommendations presented in the EKIP reference framework: [Visit the School-based interventions section](#)

**Eating habits** refer to the food and drink consumed by an individual or population group. Depending on their nutritional value, foods and beverages can make up one's eating habits on a daily, occasional or exceptional basis.

Healthy eating habits include:

- the daily consumption of a variety of highly nutritious foods and beverages and water
- the occasional or exceptional consumption of foods or beverages of low nutritional value

There are other aspects of eating habits that go beyond the nutritional value of food. Food conveys gastronomic, cultural and emotional value.

### ACTIONS TO BE PRIORITIZED IN SCHOOLS SHOULD:

Empower young people to **make healthy eating choices** and to develop a healthy relationship with food. Nutrient-dense foods and beverages should be made available in sufficient quantity and variety and be economically accessible. Water should be easily accessible at all times.



## SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage pleasure, experimentation and discovery: handling, smelling, preparing and tasting different foods.
- Encourage listening to and respecting hunger and satiety cues.
- Reward or reprimand young people using means other than food (e.g. special activities). Food should not be used as negotiating tool with young people.
- Emphasize that healthy eating consists in a variety of foods, and that drinking water is a priority. Nutrient-dense foods should be prioritized in both frequency and quantity.
- Qualify foods in a positive way. The dichotomization of foods, using terms such as “good,” “bad,” “allowed” or “forbidden,” should be avoided.
- Ensure that food concepts are fact-based rather than derived from personal experiences or popular myths (e.g. sugar makes children hyperactive).
- Focus interventions on adopting and maintaining healthy habits, not on weight.
- Avoid the use of personal stories from individuals or public figures who have suffered from eating disorders because of the risk of negative effects, such as the trivialization of dieting and harmful eating behaviours.
- Do not make positive or negative comments about weight, height or physical appearance, whether these comments are about yourself or others.
- Initiate and facilitate positive food-related discussions. Do not promote dieting, unhealthy eating behaviours or any other unhealthy weight-loss methods. Do encourage the development of students’ critical thinking about health risks in this regard.
- Encourage the development of students’ critical thinking about the negative consequences of consuming sugary drinks and the effects of the targeted marketing of these beverages.



## KEYWORDS

- Drinks
- Snacks
- Eating behaviours
- Water, hydration
- Canada Food Guide
- Hygiene and cleanliness
- Body image
- Food supply
- Meals
- Routine
- Hunger and satiety cues
- Nutritional value



See also the sheet dedicated to [General recommendations for health and well-being actions in schools](#), which are not linked to a specific theme.

