



NUTRITION

Healthy Eating and Active Living



Big Sisters
of BC Lower Mainland



Nutrition plays a major role in a young person’s physical and mental development as well as their future health. Despite the importance of eating right and getting a proper amount of exercise, there is a lot of confusion regarding what are the “right” foods to eat, and what is the ideal amount of physical activity. Kids and youth today get mixed messages regarding junk food, body image, and healthy lifestyles. This article provides a starting point to understanding healthy eating, exercise, calories, and serving sizes. You can do more research online or at the library, but make sure your sources are reliable! You should talk to your doctor or nutritionist for up-to-date and accurate information regarding your health.



The Great Weight Debate

Some youth assume the best way to lose weight is by drastically reducing the amount of food they take into their bodies. This strategy actually works against them, since the body goes into starvation mode when it isn’t getting enough nutrients. This means it will store more fat and restrict weight loss to prepare for famine. The best way to become more fit is by eating proper amounts of nutritious food and exercising regularly. And, it’s okay to indulge sometimes.



Fun Activity

Get a group of friends or family members together, and assign each person a “fad” diet to research. Present your findings to the group:

1. What is the logic behind the diet?
2. Is it healthy?
3. What do nutritionists say about it?

Compete to find the most ridiculous sounding diet!

Some Tips for Healthy and Nutritious Living



- Eat a balanced breakfast every day. Skipping the most important meal of the day will make you crabby and make it hard to concentrate in class. People who eat a healthy breakfast are less likely to overeat throughout the day and more likely to achieve/maintain a healthy body weight.
- Read food labels to find out what you are putting into your body! Ask your Big Sister to teach you how.
- Enjoy nutritious foods from the four food groups. More info on the next page.
- Learn what a serving size of your favourite food looks like.
- Have a treat once in a while. But, eating them all the time isn't healthy.
- Ask your parents to keep nutritious snacks around the house like yogurt, fruit, and veggies. Drink plenty of water.
- Make exercise fun. Play tag or take the dog for a walk.
- Don't follow fad diets. If they sound too good to be true, they probably are. Never starve yourself!
- When you get a good report card or your team wins, reward yourself with a fun activity or outing rather than an ice cream cone or chocolate bar.



Canada's Food Guide

Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day



	Children		Teens		Adults				
	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18 Years		19-50 Years		51+ Years	
	Girls and Boys		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Vegetables and Fruit	4	5	6	7	8	7-8	8-10	7	7
Grain Products	3	4	6	6	7	6-7	8	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	2	3-4	3-4	3-4	2	2	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	1	1	1-2	2	3	2	3	2	3

How Many Servings from Each Food Group Do I Need Daily?

(From <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guides.html>)

Fruits and Veggies

Includes: Apples, Bananas, Carrots, Potatoes, Broccoli, Spinach, etc.

Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable a day! Choose fruits and veggies prepared with little or no added sugar, salt, or fat. Having at least one fruit or vegetable at each meal and as a snack will help you get the daily amount you need. Have whole veggies and fruit more often than juice. Eat a variety of colours! Yellow corn, blue blueberries, red apples, green cucumbers, etc.!



Grains

Includes: Whole-Grain Breads and Pasta, Barley, Brown and Wild Rice, Oats, etc.

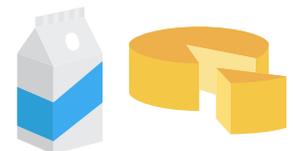
Make your grain products whole grain every day. Choose grain products that are low in fat, sugar, or salt. Grain products, particularly whole grains, are a source of fibre and usually low in fat. A diet rich in whole grains can lower your risk of heart disease, and is more likely to fill you up quicker.



Milk and Alternatives

Includes: Milk, Cheese, Yogurt, Fortified Soy Milk, etc.

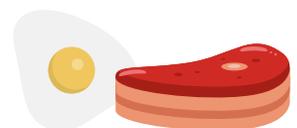
Milk and alternatives contain important nutrients, such as calcium and vitamin D that are good for healthy bones and optimum health. Drink two glasses a day, or soy milk if you don't drink milk! Select milk alternatives that are lower in fat.



Meat and Alternatives

Includes: Meat (Pork, Beef, Poultry, Fish), Eggs, Beans, Lentils, Tofu, etc.

Meat and alternatives provide protein, fat, and other important nutrients including iron, zinc, magnesium, and B vitamins. Eat at least two servings of fish a week, select lean meats and lunch meats low in sodium (salt) and fat, and trim visible fat from meats. Remove the skin on poultry.





How Adults and Families Can Model Healthy Living

Respect your children's ability to determine how much food to eat.

It's the parent's or caregiver's responsibility to choose healthy foods to serve, not the child's. Children can determine how much food they need. Throughout the day, children are able to adjust their intake. This explains why some children eat more one meal than another.

Be a role model for healthy eating.

Have meals together. Turn off the TV. Set a good example. Eating is a social activity and the children are influenced to try new foods when they watch others enjoying good food. Keep nutritious food on hand so it's always available. Involve your kids in meal planning—they will be more likely to eat foods they had a hand in choosing or preparing.

Serve small nutritious meals and snacks each day.

Aim to meet Canada's Food Guide recommended servings for each food group. Provide meals and snacks at regular intervals—every two to three hours. Discourage snacking between those times. Create fun and healthy snacks with your kids like "ants on a log" (peanut butter and raisins on celery sticks).

Organize fun activities.

Children rely on parents and caregivers to provide opportunities for physical activity. Some ideas include: bicycling, walking, dancing, games of ball or tag in the summer, and sledding or building a snowman in the winter.

Don't use food as a reward or punishment.

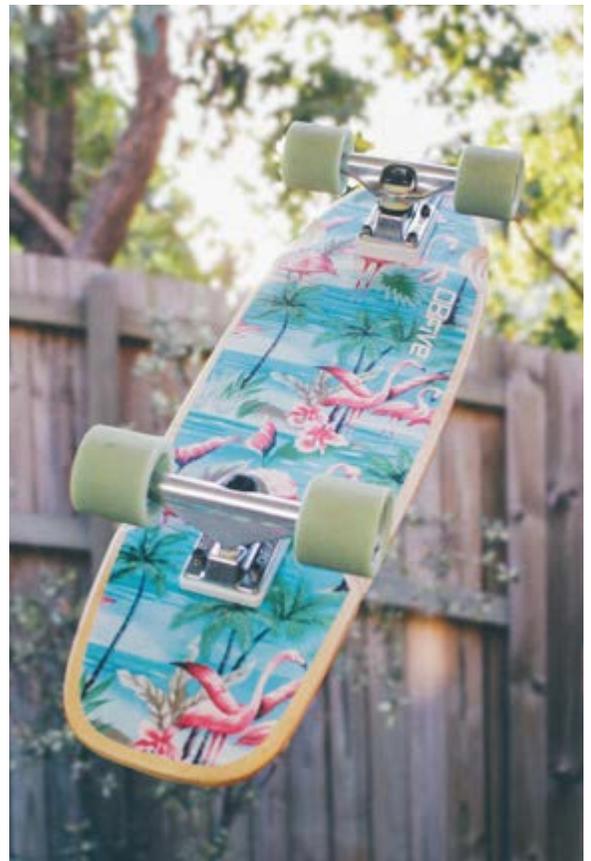
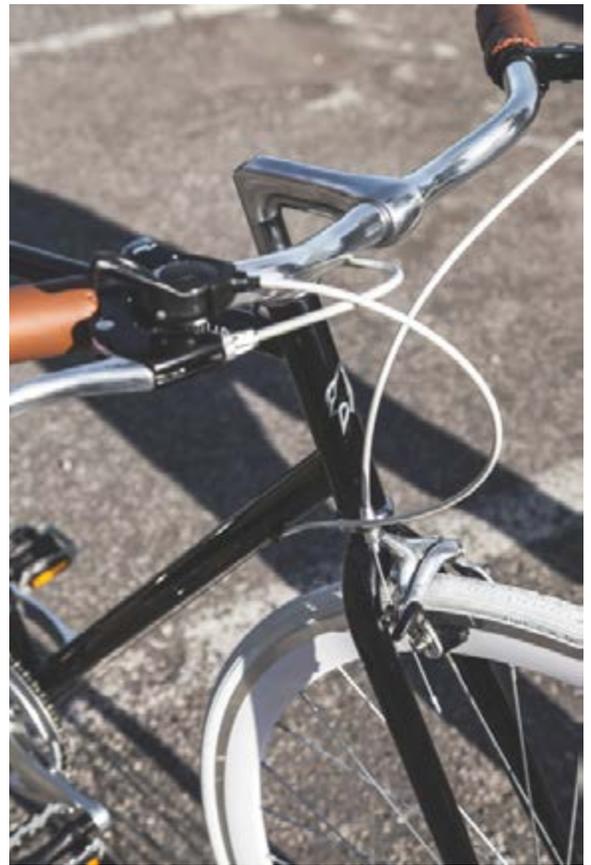
Don't always go out for ice cream or pizza when your child gets a good report card or wins a sports game. Reward them instead with a fun activity like a trip to the park and quality time with you. Using food as a reward or punishment will only promote emotional eating. Children should eat when hungry, not when they are happy, sad, or lonely.

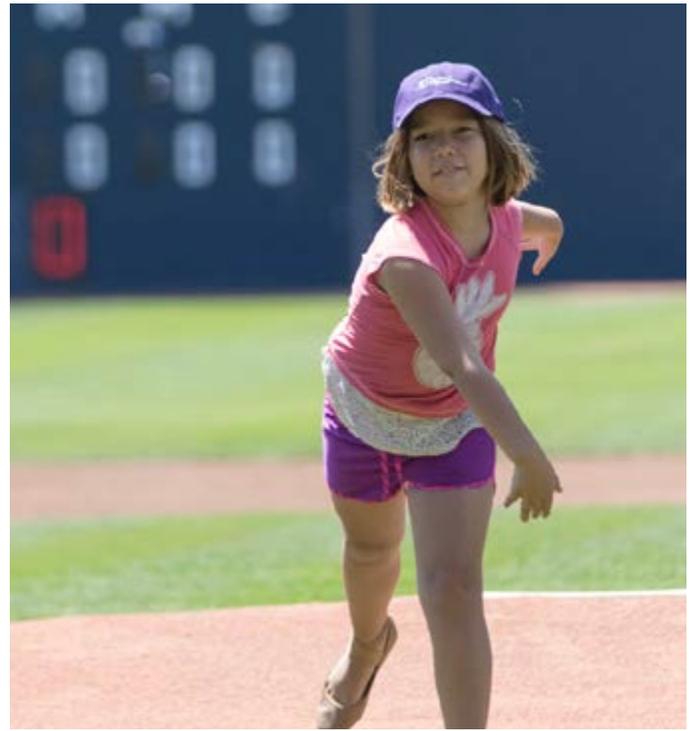
For more great tips visit www.actnowbc.ca

How Can I Fit Exercise into my Busy Day?

Exercise doesn't have to mean spending an hour every day on the treadmill!

- Find an exercise buddy. Instead of watching TV, go rollerblading or play a sport with your friends.
- Walk or bike instead of asking for a ride. Go for a walk at lunchtime instead of sitting around.
- You don't need to exercise for hours at a time. Start at 15-20 minutes a day then build up from there as you get more fit.
- If you love video games, play active ones like Wii Tennis or Dance Dance Revolution.
- Sign up for an active class like karate, skating, running, rock climbing, or dance.
- Take your dog or a neighbour's dog for a walk (with permission of course!)
- Go to the zoo, theme park or a museum—you do a lot of walking but with cool scenery! Shopping can also count as exercise if you walk at a brisk pace through the mall or window shop!
- Have a water balloon fight with your Big Sister, or run through the sprinkler. Fly a kite or toss a frisbee!
- Have a snowball fight or shovel the driveway. Swimming is also great exercise!
- Try to exercise even when you are tired. It will wake you up! Play music to motivate yourself.
- Remember to always warm-up before you begin exercising! Stretching will also help you become more flexible.
- Drink lots of water too!





How Often Do I Need to Exercise? Should I Eat Before I Exercise?

There is no specific formula, but it is recommended you exercise daily!

Squeeze in exercise whenever you can. Get 30 minutes of activity each day—go for a jog, practice soccer, or play Dance Dance Revolution.

Eat meals 2-4 hours before starting activities and have a snack 1-2 hours before playing sports. Focus on fluids, carbohydrates, and leaner protein.

Energy drinks and caffeine aren't recommended. Fuel yourself during longer exercise sessions with fresh orange sections or sips of a healthy sports drink. Water is the best drink to quench your thirst.

To fully recover after activities, the Dietitians of Canada suggests eating carbohydrates and protein, and drinking fluids as soon as possible, especially if you plan on being active again tomorrow. A good meal idea is lean steak or chicken, a baked potato, salad, and milk. Snacks could be cereal, yogurt, fruit salad, juice, or a homemade shake.

Active kids may need 500 to 1500 more calories each day than their inactive peers. Eat three healthy meals a day plus three or four healthy snacks. Pack your training bag with drinks and nutritious snacks!



Q: What is a Calorie?

A: A Calorie is one unit measurement of energy. We consume calories in the foods we eat, and we burn calories when we are active and exercising. 3500 calories is equivalent to one pound lost or gained.



The Benefits of Physical Activity

It's important to see exercise as a way to get healthier and feel better, rather than specifically to see the number on the scale change. Exercise will help you maintain a healthy weight but there are many other benefits including more energy, better sleep, increased self-confidence and strength, fun social time with friends, increased endurance, etc. Regular exercise also helps to reduce anxiety!

The best type of exercise is cross-training. This means mixing up your routine to work different muscle groups, rather than do the same type of exercise day after day. This will also prevent boredom and make working out more fun!

Cross-training means alternating between different types of exercise.

Cardiovascular exercises are exercises that get your heart pumping, burn lots of energy, and help build stronger bones. This could include going for a jog, skating, cheerleading, dancing, team sports, or other activities that make you sweat!

Muscle conditioning exercises help raise your metabolism (the way your body burns food for energy), boost your self-esteem, and lowers your risk of osteoporosis! Activities to build muscle could include weight lifting, push-ups, sit-ups, crunches, etc. Playing sports can also help tone your muscles.

Flexibility exercises stretch your muscles, which can help prevent injuries. Examples include stretching and yoga. Yoga has the added benefit of relaxing the body and making you feel less stressed!

How can Big Sisters Help their Little Lead a Healthier Lifestyle?

Create healthier alternatives to your favourite snacks.

Instead of microwave popcorn, make air-popped. Instead of chips, try baked fruit or veggie chips. Kids also love fruit with yogurt dip, or vegetables cut and arranged in creative shapes.

Move your bodies!

Instead of a movie, play an active game or dance around to music.

Support Your Little's specific needs.

Children in grades 2-3 are ready to learn the basics for making healthy food choices, while those in grades 4-6 are ready to assess their eating patterns and develop healthy eating plans, use food records, and discuss and solve problems. Older kids can track their food intake on an interactive website like www.eatracker.ca to see how their food and activity choices compare to Health Canada's recommendations. Don't teach young kids to count calories, instead, focus on eating enough nutritious foods. Eat fruits and veggies of a variety of different colours to vary intake.

Discuss nutrition, exercise, and positive body-image.

Ask your Little if he or she is happy about their body. Clear up any misperceptions about food as they arise (eg. assuming soda pop is healthy because it is fat-free) as well as any worries or concerns about their health or appearance.



How Can I Lose Weight in Just my Stomach?

First things first. Remember that you are beautiful and perfect just the way you are. But, to answer your question, you can't target weight loss to one area of your body. Add cardiovascular activity to burn energy and muscle conditioning exercises to strengthen specific areas (like crunches or push-ups) to your workout routine.



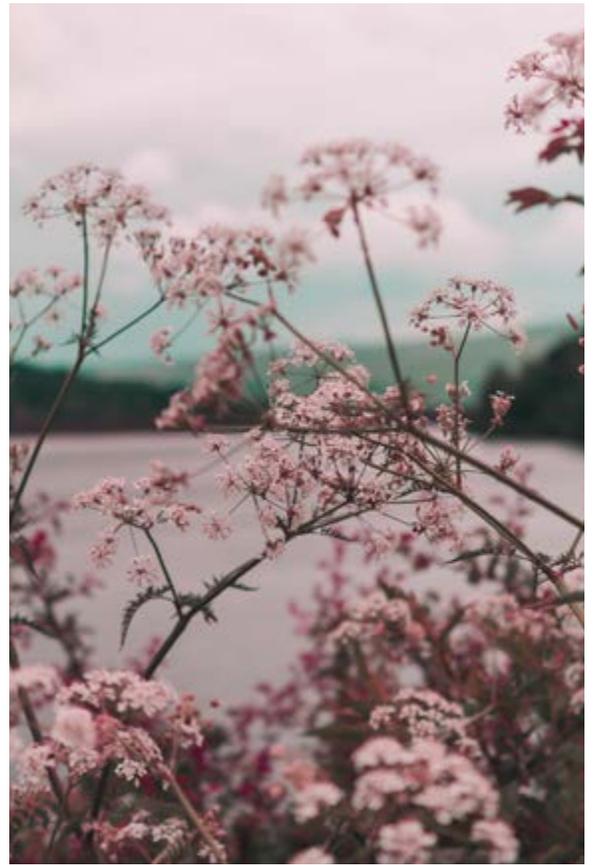
Why Do Boys Seem to Get more Muscular than Girls?

Boys build muscle faster than girls do because they have higher levels of testosterone. Girls can still build muscle by eating healthy food and exercising—it just might take a bit longer to notice the results!

How to Prevent Eating Disorders

If you are worried you may be starting to develop an eating disorder please talk to your mentor or an adult as soon as possible.

Eating disorders are common among youth—especially with today's beauty standards glorifying the thin body-type. It is important that we understand that there is not one perfect body type or an ideal one. Everybody looks different and that should be celebrated rather than judged.



Resources for Eating Disorders

Eating Disorder Hope

<https://www.eatingdisorderhope.com>

Kelty Eating Disorders

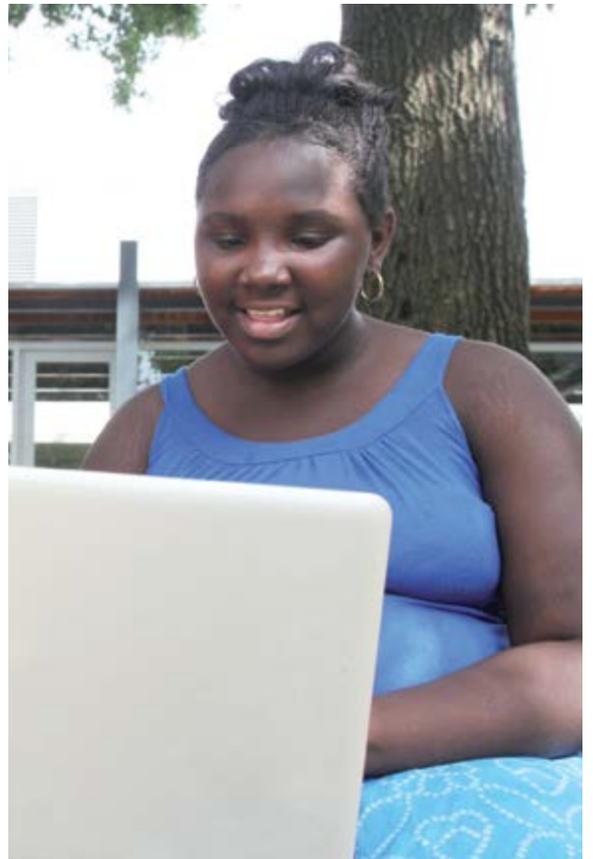
<https://keltyeatingdisorders.ca>

Looking Glass BC

<http://www.lookingglassbc.com>

BC Children's Hospital

<http://www.bcchildrens.ca/our-services/mental-health-services/eating-disorders>





Resources

For LITTLES (6-12)

- Betty Crocker's Kids Cook! New York: Macmillan, 1999.
- Showdown at the Food Pyramid. Rex Barron. New York: G.P Putnam's Sons, 2004.
- The Healthy Body Cookbook: Over 50 Fun Activities and Delicious Recipes for Kids. Joan D'Amico & Karen Eich Drummond.
- Millie Metet's Nutrition Adventure (CD-Rom). New York: Trivola Publishing. 2001.
- Fuel Up: A Girl's Guide to Eating Well, Leslie Levchuck. New York: Rosen Central, 1999.
- Annie Pitts, Artichoke. Diane DeGroat. New York: SeaStar Books, 2001.

For TEENS (13-17)

- The Ultimate Weight Solution for Teens: the 7 Keys to Weight Freedom. Jay McGraw. New York: Free Press, 2003.
- Beauty Begins Inside. (VHS). Montreal, NFB, 1996.

For BIG SISTERS & PARENTS

- Healthy Eating for Preteens and Teens: The Ultimate Guide to Diet, Nutrition and Food. Leslie Beck. Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005.
- Eat, Play, and be Healthy: the Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating for Kids. W. Allan Walker with Courtney Humphries. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.
- Super Snacks: Step-By-Step Healthy Recipes for Kids. Bobbie Kalman. New York: Crabtree Pub. Company, 2003.
- Healthy Kids: Help Them Eat Smart and Stay Active for Life. Marilu Henner, with Lorin Henner. New York: Regan Books, 2001.
- Children and Teens Afraid to Eat: Helping Youth in Today's Weight-Obsessed World. Frances M. Berg. ND: Healthy Weight Network, 2001.

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guides.html>

Dial-A-Dietician Free Service Toll-free in BC:

1-800-667-3438 or 8-1-1

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating>

Dietitians of Canada – Eat Well, Live Well Site

Includes a virtual grocery store tour and virtual kitchen and recipe analyzer, games for menu planning, nutrition challenges, and more.

www.dietitians.ca

Act Now BC

BC's Healthy Living Initiative!

www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca

Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children & Youth

Tips to get moving and motivated!

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/index-eng.php>



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