

November 2023, Nutrition E-Bites



It's hard to believe that the holidays are upon us and in a few short weeks, we will be welcoming a new year! Before we all get tied up with holiday celebrations and get together, now is a great time to reflect on the goals that you may have set for yourself at the beginning of the year.

If you did set specific goals for yourself to work on this year...

Were you able to achieve your goal?

What were some of your challenges that you experienced that may have prevented you from doing so?

What were some of your successes?

If you have yet to accomplish all or part of your goal, there is good news...there is still time to do so! And even if you have yet to set a goal, but want to end this year with a change - there is no better time than now to do so!

Since the countdown is on before 2024 arrives, be sure that your goal for the remainder of 2023 is **specific, realistic, and attainable!**

November is a month that recognizes and raises awareness for many important health issues, such as men's health and diabetes awareness.

This month, we are focusing on the importance of establishing a foundation of healthy living in childhood and adolescent years, that will pave the way for healthy living into adulthood.

Share this newsletter with the children and adolescents in your life to help spread awareness on this important topic.

Canadian Children and Adolescents Food Choices

The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) collects information related to health status, health care utilization and health determinants for the Canadian population ⁽¹⁾. In 2004 and 2015, the survey provided Canadians with the

information and opportunity to review nutrition related topics and food choices.

The results of the survey from 2004 and 2015 shed light on concerns arising among Canadian children and adolescents, such as ^(2,3) :

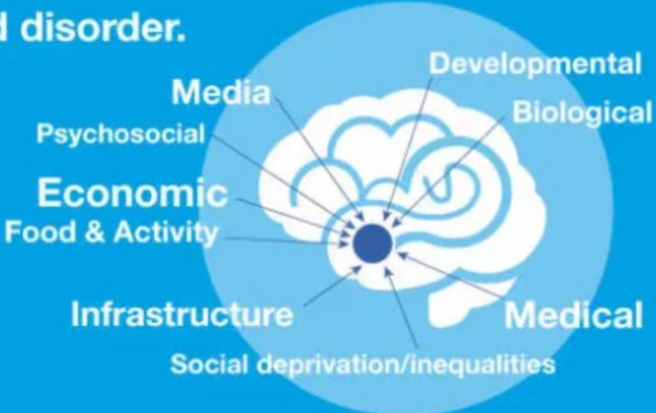
- low fruit and vegetable intake
- high intake of "other" foods, which includes foods high in fat, salt, sugar and processed foods, and
- increased intake from sugar sweetened beverages

The results and statistics gathered from the CCHS were part of the driving force for many healthy eating initiatives and strategies implemented nationwide, that we see today in our schools, restaurants and grocery stores, to target the rising rates of obesity.

Despite all these positive steps, we know that obesity and our health are not just simply impacted by our food choices...

Obesity is a brain-related disorder.

The hypothalamus regulates energy intake and expenditure to maintain weight, but its normal function can be disrupted by biological and environmental factors. **Once disrupted, our feelings of hunger and fullness (satiety) can be affected.**



The diagram shows a stylized brain with several arrows pointing to it from different directions. Each arrow is labeled with a factor: Media, Psychosocial, Economic Food & Activity, Infrastructure, Social deprivation/inequalities, Medical, Biological, and Developmental. The brain is depicted in a light blue color against a darker blue background.

As shown in the image above, Obesity Canada highlights the different factors that can impact our health, which often go unrecognized, solely placing blame on the individual.

To no surprise, the media is a strong influencer that places many children and adolescents (adults included) at risk for certain health related behaviours.

Food Marketing

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.⁽⁵⁾ And unfortunately, most foods that are advertised to children and adolescents are highly processed food items. ⁽⁶⁾

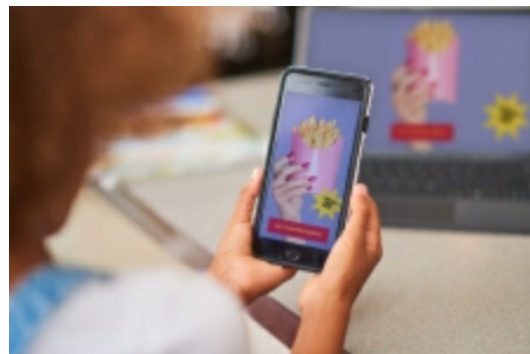
Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to marketing techniques and tactics. **Health Canada lists the following reasons as to why they are most susceptible to marketing** ⁽⁶⁾...

- they are a highly targeted market
 - Many marketing strategies are meant to appeal specifically to kids, like:
 - using popular cartoon characters on food products
 - putting food and drinks or brands into online games or viral videos
 - offering toys or prizes when you buy food products and fast food meals
- they are an easy-to-reach audience
 - They see many ads throughout the day:
 - at school
 - in sports arenas
 - in stores and shopping centres
 - on electronic devices like cell phones and tablets
- of their developmental stage
 - Kids tend to:
 - be more impulsive
 - have a strong desire to fit in
 - prefer immediate gratification
 - be more susceptible to peer influence
 - have less ability to understand the purpose of marketing
 - have less ability to notice when they are being targeted by marketing, especially when viewing newer forms of advertising such as those on social media

Being aware of food marketing & food choices...

Ask yourself these questions ⁽⁵⁾

- Is it cool?
- Is it healthy?
- Will it improve your mood?
- Will it provide nutritional benefit?
- Where did the message come from?
- Was it from a celebrity endorsement?
- Was it from a sponsored blog post?
- Was it from social media?



But what about those foods and drinks that are marketed for weight loss?

There are countless posts on social media that promise a number of things: rapid weight loss and improved mood to name a couple. It is very easy to jump on board, with the hopes of a positive outcome. Why wouldn't there be, they say results are guaranteed....



At a young age, it can be difficult to spot a restrictive and harmful fad diet.

To learn how to spot a fad diet, click [here!](#)

Despite the different factors that may impact our health and sway our choices and behaviours, there are ways to limit exposure to food marketing... ⁽⁶⁾



- Limit screen time (*including television and electronic devices*)
- Limit the amount information that we disclose on the internet to prevent targeted ads
- Talk to your children/adolescents about food marketing, the impact that it can have, and how to spot marketing techniques. And if you feel comfortable doing so, this is a perfect opportunity to educate them on how to navigate a food label!

Establishing Healthy Eating Habits to Last a Lifetime

Share these ideas with the children and adolescents in your life to help them develop habits that will make the healthy choice the easy choice! ⁽⁷⁾

Every day, choose a variety of:

- vegetables and fruit, including:
 - dark green vegetables such as kale and bok choy each day
 - orange vegetables such as carrots and sweet potato most days
- whole grain foods, such as:
 - oats
 - wild rice
 - whole wheat pasta
- protein foods such as:
 - eggs
 - nuts and seeds
 - fish and shellfish
 - beans, peas, and lentils
 - lean red meats, including wild game
 - lower fat dairy products such as milk and yogurt
 - fortified soy beverages, tofu, soybeans and other soy products

Make healthy drink choices

Making healthy drink choices is as important as your food choices.

Make water your drink of choice.

Healthy drink options other than water can include:

- white milk (unsweetened lower fat milk)
- unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages

Get involved

Helping plan and prepare meals can give you the confidence you need to make healthy choices. Getting involved means you can help your family choose healthy foods.

This is a great chance to take charge and learn new skills. Try helping with:

- grocery shopping
- preparing meals and snacks
- being responsible for certain meals
- meal planning and creating a grocery list

Plan meals and snacks

Life can be busy. Planning ahead can be the key to healthy eating.

Mornings can be rushed, but eating breakfast is important. If you often skip breakfast, think of the reasons why and plan ways to overcome these.

Try preparing your breakfast the night before. Do you have an activity early in the morning? Think about bringing breakfast with you.

Thinking about your day ahead and planning to bring food can help you choose healthier options and save money. This can help you avoid being as tempted by foods around you, such as those in vending machines.

Planning and packing snacks often gets forgotten. When planning and preparing lunches, don't forget about your snacks.

When you get home, you may be tempted to grab the first thing you see. Plan ahead and prepare some healthy snacks.

Eat meals with your family

Eating meals with others is an important part of healthy eating.

The meals you eat with your family can give you a chance to connect with your family.

This can help you:

- develop healthy habits
- learn about culture and food traditions
- build and strengthen family relationships

Eat without distractions

Focus all of your attention on eating. Turn off the TV and put away your phone, lap-top or other screens. When you are distracted while you eat, you can lose track of how much you have eaten.

[Click here to read more about healthy eating habits & why healthy eating matters!](#)

Dietitian Approved Fall Favourite Recipes

Click on the image for the recipe



**Anti-Inflammatory Lemony
Salmon & Orzo Casserole**

Featured on EatingWell



Everyone's Favourite Taco Soup
Featured on EatingWell



Slow-Cooker Buffalo Chicken Chili
Featured on EatingWell



Lemon-Garlic Dump Dinner with Chicken, Potatoes and Brussel Sprouts
Featured on EatingWell



Cheesy Black Bean & Quinoa Skillet Casserole
Featured on EatingWell



Spicy Shrimp and Cauliflower Rice
Featured on EatingWell



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Inner Health Nutrition Consulting | 8333 Weston Rd, Woodbridge ON, Woodbridge , L4L 8Z2
Canada

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