NUTRITION UPDATE

A newsletter for professionals

October 2015

Developed by the Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan

Helping Children to be Competent Eaters

Children are more likely to grow and develop to their full potential when they are well nourished. In order for this to happen, they need to be supported to become competent eaters.

Competent eaters consume healthy food, are able to enjoy a variety of foods, try new foods and rely on their internal cues of hunger and fullness.

CHILDREN AND ADULTS HAVE DIFFERENT BEHAVIOURS AROUND FOOD:

• **Children are normally cautious about eating new foods.** They may like a food once and decide not to eat it the next time it is offered. As they challenge themselves to meet other developmental milestones like walking and talking, children will learn to like new foods by seeing, touching and tasting them many times. Seeing friends and family eating these foods helps children to learn to eat them too.

• **Children eat better when** they are given the opportunity to choose from a small variety of foods and when they are able to choose how much they will eat of these foods. Children need to know they can politely turn down food, take a food and not eat it, or taste a food and not have to finish it.

• **Children may eat more one day and less the next** and this is a normal part of healthy development. Children need to learn to listen to their internal sense of hunger and fullness. Ultimately this will help them to eat what and how much they need to grow properly.

Adults choose <u>what</u> foods to offer, <u>when</u> to offer them and <u>where</u> they will be eaten. Children choose <u>how much</u> food <u>if any</u> they will eat.

HOW TO BE A SUPPORTIVE ADULT AND PROMOTE A POSITIVE FOOD ENVIRONMENT:

• **Provide structured times for meals and snacks.** Young children under the age of 6 years, need a distraction-free sit down snack time in the midmorning and midafternoon. Older children may also need a snack, but should come to lunch hungry and ready to eat. Do not allow eating during classes and other instruction time. Offer only water between meals and snacks.

• **Give children enough time to eat well without distraction.** Turn off televisions and other media during snack and meal times.

• **Children eat best when they eat in designated spaces,** preferably a lunch room or cafeteria with tables and chairs or desks.

• **Be present at meals and snacks.** Be friendly, personable and provide companionship but **do not interfere with children's eating**. Do not praise, bribe, cheerlead or restrict children's food intake. **Be a good role model**; demonstrate healthy eating habits around children.

• Elementary school age children do not have the ability to make rational and healthy decisions about the type of food to select. Adults need to **provide them with healthy choices to support them in food selection.** Often foods found in vending machines or canteens, or those used in classroom celebrations or as rewards are "easy to like foods" such as candy, chocolate, sweets and chips. These foods interfere with children's interest in trying other foods and can spoil their appetites for the next meal. Limit access to these foods to support children's ability to eat well.

• **Teach and support a respect for diversity in body size and shape** and that "everybody" is different in regards to energy needs, size and shape.

"If we put children in a positive food environment, we can trust them to eat and grow in a way that is right for them" -Ellyn Satter

References: 1. Ellyn Satter Institute. Feeding in the School Community www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/cms-assets/documents/99541-178972.lytle.pdf

2. Lytle et al. Children's interpretation of Nutrition Messages. Society for Nutrition Education. http://ow.ly/RsQod

Ask A Nutritionist

Q How do I create a positive atmosphere for students to try new foods?

A Creating positive environments for students to explore foods is important. The behaviours children develop around food early on, impact lifelong eating behaviours and long term health. Repeated exposures to foods including growing, preparing and tasting food, are effective ways to influence eating behaviours.

One great way to introduce new foods in a positive way is to have a tasting party. For example, present vegetables and fruit in a rainbow of colours for the students to try. *Action Schools! BC* www.actionschoolsbc.ca/ uses five colour categories: yellow/orange, blue/purple, red, green and white/brown. Foods are purchased to fit all five colours and chopped to small pieces for tasting. Students are encouraged, but not forced, to try all the colours. Sometimes it can take children 10-15 times of seeing a new food before trying it. Encourage students to describe what they are experiencing from all their senses (taste, texture, smell, sound, sight). Provide students a napkin so that if they do not like the food they can spit it out politely rather than swallowing it. Provide a garbage can nearby. The best advice is to have fun!

Q I find that students are often rushing to eat their lunches because they want to go out to play. How do I encourage students to eat their whole lunch before running outside?

A Meals eaten at schools are an important source of energy and nutrition to help children get through the day. School communities can encourage the development of healthy eating behaviours by providing comfortable and calm eating spaces for children. To help support this, some schools have implemented a 'Reverse Lunch' or 'Recess Before Lunch.' As the name implies, this is when students go outside to play before eating their lunches. Schools who have implemented a reverse lunch find students:

- behave better on the playground, in the lunchroom and in the classroom
- take in more nutrients, like calcium and protein, by wasting less and eating more of their lunch
- focus on eating rather than rushing through lunch to get to the playground
- litter less on school grounds and inside the school
- need less supervision during lunch
- return to the classroom calmer and ready to work after lunch

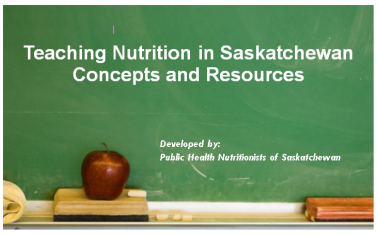
Mealtime should be a time for students to relax, socialize and nourish their bodies and minds. When the mealtime and lunchroom environment is pleasant, students eat better, achieve better academically, and have fewer behavioural problems. Children need at least 15-20 minutes for a calm lunch. Positive adult supervision would support children to listen to their bodies and ensure they eat until they are satisfied. Lunch time is also a valuable social time for students. Students should be supported to have conversation with their peers without the distraction of television. Ideally, all of these behaviours can be modeled by an adult in the lunch area. For more on how to build a healthy eating environment in schools check out **Nourishing Minds** from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education www.education.gov.sk.ca/nourishing-minds/.

Check out this video to see how one school made their mealtime more comfortable: healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Montana/PPMeals/ComfortableCafeterias.mp4

To implement a Reverse Lunch at your school check out this tool kit from Alberta Health Services: www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-reverse-lunch-toolkit.pdf

Q I am developing the lesson plans for my health class this year and I am looking for activities to do for the nutrition related learning outcomes. Where can I find good and credible resources for ideas?

A Try *Teaching Nutrition in Saskatchewan: Concepts and Resources* for grades 1-3 and 4-5.



These documents assist educators in identifying accurate and high quality nutrition information as well as hands on class activities that can help to meet the SK health education curriculum outcomes for each grade.

These resources can be downloaded from: www.rqhealth.ca/primary-health-care/nutrition-services

Resource Corner

School Nutrition Posters

Each year the Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan develop School Nutrition Posters for each month of the school year on a variety of nutrition related topics. These posters can be used in newsletters, as a part of school announcements, posted in the school, on the school website or for Facebook or Twitter posts.

For the coming fall 2015 semester the topics include:

September	Peanut and Nut Alert
October	Healthy Meals and Snacks
November	School Nutrition Environments
December	Pizza Fundraisers
January	Menu Planning
February	Weighing Children in School
March	Nutrition Month
April	Meatless Meals
May	Vegetables
June	Eating Well with Children

Posters will be coming from your local public health nutritionist, and can also be downloaded from:

www.fhhr.ca/DidYouHearUs.htm

Local Health Information on Social Media

Find your local health region on Facebook and Twitter for information on programs, services and other valuable health information and resources - click on the buttons to take you to their Facebook sites and search their Twitter names:

Health Region	Facebook	Twitter
Cypress	Find us on Facebook	@cypresshealth
Heartland	Find us on Facebook	
Kelsey Trail	Find us on Facebook	@kelseytrail
Mamawetan Churchill River	Find us on Facebook	@MCR_Health
Prince Albert Parkland	Find us on Facebook	
Regina Qu'Appelle	Find us on Facebook	@rqhealth
Saskatoon	Find us on Facebook	@saskatoonhealth
Saskatoon Upstream	Find us on Facebook	@upstreamaction
Sun Country	Find us on Facebook	

Self-Study Course for Nutrition Coordinators

The Nutrition Coordinator Self-Study Course is intended for people who plan, prepare and serve meals in an organization such as a daycare or school, but have little formal training to complement their experience. The course content covers a variety of topics including: healthy eating, Canada's Food Guide, menu planning, label reading, food and kitchen safety, budgeting, quantity food production, recipe modification, allergies and school based daycares.

Next Course Date: January 2016 (registration required)
Tuition: $215 + GST (includes 424 page manual)

For more information or to register contact North West Regional College at:
(306) 937-5102 or Marney.Robinson@nwrc.sk.ca

Web link:www.nwrc.sk.ca/program.html?ProgramID=224&NavID=13

In the News

Does Canada Need a National School Food Program?

Canada, unlike many other countries, does not have a national school food program. A coalition of health and food-related organizations including Food Secure Canada, however, would like to change this. Their joint initiative, *Raising the Bar on Student Food Programs*, is calling on Health Canada to set national school food guidelines and to help fund school food programs for all schools. They would like to see a mid-day meal offered. This has been shown to have the greatest impact for the money. It benefits the kids who come to school without eating breakfast in the morning, along with the kids who may not have a *healthy* meal at home.

The ideal national program does not need to replace provincial ones that already exist, but it should provide enough additional funding and appropriate guidelines to ensure that all kids, regardless of their economic background or what's in their kitchen cupboards at home, have access to healthy food at school. Studies have shown that kids receiving subsidized school meals see positive health results.

For now, Raising the Bar remains an idea-in-progress awaiting the right support and the funds.

References:
1. Does Canada Need a National School Food Program? The Tyee. Retrieved Aug 27, 2015 from http://ow.ly/RsHeq
2. Moving Forward with Strength and Diversity: Raising the Bar on Student Food Programs http://ow.ly/RsHio

Chocolate Milk in Schools

To serve or not to serve…

A study conducted by researchers from the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition at the University of Saskatchewan, funded by the Dairy Farmers of Canada, looked at the **"Impact of the removal of Chocolate Milk (CM) from School Milk Programs for Children in Saskatoon, Canada."**

Media reports of this study stated, removing the chocolate-flavoured option at elementary schools led to a reduction in milk consumed and researchers suggested that perhaps schools need to reconsider removing flavoured milk.

When Dr. Yoni Freedhoff, Family Dr. and Assistant Professor at the University of Ottawa, took a closer look at the data, he found that when CM was taken away from schools in the study, the kids who drank milk, only drank 12mL (4/5ths of a tablespoon) less per day than they did when chocolate milk was available. They also found that *on average* students were still meeting the 3–4 recommended servings of milk and alternatives per day even if they chose not to purchase milk at school.

The study showed that by removing CM from these schools, in the first month nearly half of the initial CM drinkers switched to white. And in drinking less CM, students consumed nearly 2 full cups of added sugar less each month. Freedhoff argues then that "If anything, this study lends very strong support for those thinking schools shouldn't be offering sugar sweetened milk to students."

So does chocolate milk *need* be served in schools for children to get their *recommended* daily intake? Probably not, but whether or not to serve it is up to each school to decide.

References: 1. Henry et al. Removal of chocolate milk in Saskatoon schools http://ow.ly/RsGhJ 2. Weighty Matters Blog: http://ow.ly/RsGpL

Provincial Nutrition Newsletter Committee

Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan

Contributors for this issue include members of the School Age Nutrition Committee of the Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan Working Group:

Chelsea Belt
Chelsea Brown
Cathy Knox
Cassandra Touet
Barb Wright

This newsletter is distributed three times annually to health professionals, educators, community leaders and others. It is designed to provide up-to-date nutrition information and highlight important initiatives and resources.

We welcome letters and contributions from our readers. Please send correspondence to your local Public Health Nutritionist

Local Contact:

Audrey Boyer, RD
Public Health & CPNP Nutritionist
Population Health Unit
AHA, KYRHA, MCRRHA
(205) 425-8578
audrey.boyer@pophealthnorthsask.ca