



healthy living

fact sheet

Healthy Eating

- Evidence shows vegetables and fruit have a protective effect against the development of chronic disease.¹
- A one-serving-per-day increase of vegetable and fruit intake is linked to a 20% reduction in all causes of mortality.²
- 61% of British Columbian children aged 12-18 do not eat the recommended minimum of five daily servings of vegetables and fruit.³
- A reduction in the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages has been identified as possibly the best single opportunity to curb the obesity epidemic.⁴
- Women in households that were marginally food-insecure were significantly more likely to be obese and more likely to gain weight than women in food-secure households.⁵
- The “Ditch the Fizz” intervention implemented in British elementary schools successfully decreased the number of children classified as overweight.⁶
- Children consume 30% of their daily calories at school.⁷
- Consumption of snack foods such as chips, crackers, popcorn and pretzels has tripled since the 1970s.⁸
- A 355 ml serving of pop may contain between 10 and 12 teaspoons of sugar and 140 to 160 calories.⁹
- Since the mid 1970s, soft drink consumption among North Americans has doubled. For example, between 1977 and 1996, the size of soft drink portions grew from 387 to 588 millilitres.¹⁰
- US research shows that many common fast foods including soft drinks, salty snacks, hamburgers and desserts began increasing in size in the 1970s, rose sharply in the 1980s, and have continued to grow. This trend parallels the obesity and overweight epidemic around the world.¹¹
- The World Health Organization identified a health-promoting school environment as one of five key strategies for addressing the growing trends in obesity and overweight.¹²

^{1, 2} Khaw, K.T., et al., Relation between plasma ascorbic acid and mortality in men and women in EPIC-Norfolk prospective study: a prospective population study. *European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition. Lancet*, 2001. 357(9257): p. 657-63.

³ Canadian Community Health Survey, Cycle 1.1 2000/01.

⁴ Apovian, C.M., Sugar-sweetened soft drinks, obesity and Type 2 diabetes. *JAMA*, 2004. 292(8): p. 978-9.

⁵ Wilde, P.E. and J.N. Peterman, Individual weight change is associated with household food security status. *J Nutr*, 2006. 136(5): p. 1395-400.

⁶ James, J., et al., Preventing childhood obesity by reducing consumption of carbonated drinks: cluster randomised controlled trial. *BMJ* 2004 328(7450): p. 1237.

⁷⁻¹² Food, Health and Well-Being in British Columbia, Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report 2005, BC Ministry of Health