

Nutrition

This fact sheet summarizes findings of the *2010 School Health Profiles*, a survey of middle school and high school principals and lead health teachers in over 300 schools in Washington State. The survey assesses health-related policies, procedures, instruction, and environments every two years.

To compare student perceptions or behaviors, selected data from the *2010 Healthy Youth Survey* are included.

The Healthy Youth Survey measured self-reported health risk behaviors of about 34,000 students in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in over 200 Washington schools.

Laws and Policies

Healthy and Hunger Free Kids Act:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/CNR_2010.htm

Local Wellness Policy Implementation:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP42-2011_os.pdf

Nutrition is essential for sustenance, growth and development, and health and well-being. Nutritional or dietary factors contribute substantially to the burden of preventable illness and premature death.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that to stay healthy, people should eat a variety of foods. A healthy diet is plentiful in grains, includes at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, and is low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

What are the Current Behaviors?

The Healthy Youth Survey reported that only 25% of 8th and 10th graders ate fruits and vegetables five or more times per day in the past week.

Almost 70% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders said they drank sweetened drinks (soda, sports drinks, Snapple®, SoBe®, etc.) at school in the past week.

Among those who drank sweetened beverages at school, 26% of 8th graders, 36% of 10th graders, and 29% of 12th graders bought those drinks at school.

Food Availability at Schools

Having convenient offerings of fruits and vegetables in vending machines, school stores, snack bars, and “a la carte” lines might help students meet the recommended five to nine servings of fruit and vegetables each day. On the other hand, easy access to unhealthy foods may increase consumption of those items.

School principals were asked about foods available at school from vending machines, school stores, canteens, or snack bars:

Less healthy options:

- 41% have cookies, crackers, cakes, pastries or baked goods that are high in fat
- 40% have salty, high fat snacks including potato chips
- 36% have candy

Healthier options:

- 36% have fruits (not fruit juice)
- 25% have non-fried vegetables (not vegetable juice)

Beverage options:

- 64% have sports drinks, such as Gatorade®
- 38% have soda pop or fruit drinks that are not 100% juice
- 37% have 2% or whole, plain, or flavored milk
- 34% have foods or beverages that contain caffeine

What Schools Can Do

Principals reported that 52% of schools prohibited all forms of advertising and promotion (e.g., contests and coupons) of less nutritious foods and beverages on school property.

16% of schools used at least three of these strategies to promote healthy eating:

- Priced nutritious food and beverage choices at a lower cost while increasing the price of less nutritious options
- Collected suggestions from students, families, and school staff on nutritious food preferences and strategies
- Provided information on the nutrition and caloric content of foods available
- Conducted taste tests to determine food preferences for nutritious items
- Provided opportunities for students to visit the cafeteria to learn about food safety, food preparation, or other nutrition topics
- Offered fruits or non-fried vegetables when foods or beverages were offered at school celebrations



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Nutrition Standards

The profiles survey showed that schools have established nutrition standards for foods they sell or serve:

- 99% for reimbursable meals
- 93% for cafeteria “a la carte” items
- 84% for snack bars / school stores
- 47% for school or class fund raisers
- 44% for class parties
- 36% for special events (e.g., parents night)
- 35% for athletic events

Nutrition Policy Guidance

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that schools evaluate all policies using a School Health Index or other self-assessment tool.

- 35% of schools reviewed nutrition policies, activities, and programs
- 35% set a nutrition goal, objective, or strategy as part of their School Improvement Plan

Student, Family, and Community Involvement

In the past two years, about a third of schools involved community members or student family members to develop or implement a policy or program on nutrition and healthy eating.

Nutrition Instruction

98% of health teachers reported trying to increase students’ knowledge of nutrition and dietary behaviors in a required health education course. Health teachers taught specific nutrition topics:

- 94% – benefits of healthy eating
- 93% – balancing food intake and physical activity
- 93% – eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- 91% – how to use food labels
- 89% – food guidance using MyPyramid
- 89% – using sugar in moderation
- 88% – choosing foods low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol
- 87% – risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- 84% – using salt and sodium in moderation
- 85% – accepting body size differences
- 81% – eating more calcium rich foods
- 80% preparing healthy meals and snacks
- 78% – signs, symptoms, and treatment for eating disorders
- 70% – food safety

Nutrition Staff Development and Collaboration

Most schools need to provide more nutrition education and training to staff.

- 37% of health teachers reported receiving professional development in the past two years
- 68% wanted to receive more staff training on the topic

More than three-quarters of health teachers reported working with nutrition and food service staff on education activities.

Resources

Action for Healthy Kids

<http://actionforhealthykids.org/>

A national partnership of organizations to promote nutrition and physical activity

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/

Adolescent and School Health Nutrition Facts

Federal Health and Fitness Policy www.fns.usda.gov/tn/

Team Nutrition is an initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to support the Child Nutrition Programs

HealthierUS School Challenge

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html

A voluntary initiative for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program

Healthy Schools, Successful Students

<http://healthyschools.ospi.k12.wa.us/waschool/>

Provides information and resources to ensure that Washington’s students are healthy and ready to learn

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) – Child Nutrition Program

www.k12.wa.us/ChildNutrition/

Child Nutrition Program at Washington State’s education agency

Partners in Action

<http://depts.washington.edu/waaction/>

Support Washington’s Nutrition & Physical Activity Plan

School Health Profiles

[www.k12.wa.us/CoordinatedSchoolHealth/](http://www.k12.wa.us/CoordinatedSchoolHealth/SchlHealthProfiles.aspx)

[SchlHealthProfiles.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/CoordinatedSchoolHealth/SchlHealthProfiles.aspx)

Information on the status of health and wellness-related policies, procedures, instruction, and environments

Resources are provided as a public service and do not imply endorsement by the State of Washington.

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