



The Healthy Kids Community Challenge

What's the key to success for The Healthy Kids Community Challenge? Committed local partners like you. We need your help to promote this important program. We also need you to think creatively about what you can do to make positive changes in our community. You could have a huge influence on the policies and programs we create for Ontario kids. You could also shape the environments where our children live, learn, eat, and play.

How the Healthy Kids Community Challenge works

Every 9 months, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care launches a new theme. The themes relate to 2 key factors associated with healthy kids: physical activity and healthy eating. Our community will rally around each theme and take on projects that will help to make positive changes happen. We will choose the ways that work best for us and fit well with where we live.

We have seen great success with our first 2 themes: **Run. Jump. Play. Every Day.** and **Water does Wonders!** Now, we are looking for committed partners to help support our next theme, **Choose to boost veggies and fruit.**

What kids and families will gain

- Better knowledge and skills for eating well and staying active.
- Better access and fewer barriers to healthy choices.
- Safe, supportive environments that make it easier to be active and choose healthy food.
- Closer links with the community and more chances to be involved and included.



How you'll benefit as a partner

- You may be able to expand the programs you've already started. Or, you may start new ones to benefit your community.
- You'll get added exposure for your business, program, or service – for instance, through local media coverage or events that bring our community together.
- This may be a chance to introduce or enhance programs and policies in your workplace. You may be able to support employees and their families in making healthy living choices.
- You will be joining forces with other community partners committed to supporting healthy kids. This will strengthen all of our efforts. And, you'll form bonds that will last beyond the Healthy Kids Community Challenge itself.

Theme 3: Choose to boost veggies and fruit.

This theme encourages kids and families to make vegetables and fruit a part of every meal and snack. Veggies and fruit contain important vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Kids need these nutrients to stay healthy. Reaching for vegetables and fruit throughout the day will help kids get at least 5 servings a day. This is the amount recommended by Canada's Food Guide.

Why should we choose to boost?

Vegetables and fruit are essential to kids' health. They are a great choice to satisfy kids' hunger throughout the day. Vegetables and fruit provide many benefits:

- They are a rich source of vitamins, minerals, fibre and other important plant nutrients.
- Eating more veggies and fruit as part of a healthy diet, combined with physical activity, can reduce the cases of chronic disease¹.
- Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruit may reduce the risk of certain types of cancer² and heart disease³. It is also linked to healthy weight and lower risk of obesity⁴.
- Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey (2.2) show that children aged 2-17 who ate vegetables and fruit less than 5 times a day were much more likely to be overweight or obese compared to those who ate vegetables and fruit more often⁵.
- The presence of neighbourhood supermarkets and farmers' markets and access to affordable vegetables and fruit⁶ is linked to healthier weights⁷.

Recommended Guidelines for Vegetable and Fruit Consumption

Canada's Food Guide recommends children aged 2-13 years old eat 4-6 servings of vegetables and fruit each day.

Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day ⁸			
Age in Years	2-3	4-8	9-13
Number of Vegetable and Fruit Servings	4	5	6



Most children are not meeting these recommendations:

- According to the Canadian Community Health Survey (2.2), almost 60% of Canadian children aged 2-17 ate less than 5 servings a day of vegetables and fruit⁹.
- Ontarians have been eating fewer vegetables and fruit in recent years:
 - ~ In 2003, 42% of Ontarians age 12 and up ate at least 5 servings of vegetables and fruit a day. In 2014, that number dropped to 38%¹⁰.

How to get involved

During Theme 3, Healthy Kids Community Challenge communities will introduce campaigns, policies, programs and other supports to encourage kids to eat more veggies and fruit. Success will depend on bringing together many sectors – municipalities, public health, recreation, child care, schools, primary care providers, sports leagues, agriculture, local business, to name a few. Together, partners like you can act as champions of healthy eating. For example, partners can:



- Improve access to healthy choices and limit the availability of unhealthy ones.
- Increase the food knowledge and skills of children and their families. These include shopping, cooking, and gardening skills.
- Change norms. Model healthy behaviours. Make vegetables and fruit the accessible choice for local kids and residents.
- Commit to **not** market or promote unhealthy foods to kids in retail settings, or as part of sports and recreation programs.
- Champion The Healthy Kids Community Challenge by encouraging employees/members to get involved and model healthy behaviours.
- Build a more supportive food environment with appealing access to vegetables and fruit. We need to make vegetables and fruit the accessible choice in our community and in the places where kids spend time. This includes programs at schools, community centres, public facilities, sports and recreation centres and at community events.

Think about what else your business or organization can do to support easier access to and availability of vegetables and fruit for local kids and families. Our community is in a great position to help kids make healthier choices because we are part of The Healthy Kids Community Challenge.

To learn more about the activities in our community or to get involved, contact your Healthy Kids Community Challenge project manager:

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Name

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Email

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Telephone

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Website

Learn more about healthy eating for kids at Ontario.ca/healthykids



- 1 World Health Organization. The World Health Report, reducing risks, promoting life. Geneva: WHO; 2002
- 2 World Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research. Food, nutrition, physical activity, and the prevention of cancer: a global perspective. Washington, DC: AIRC; 2007
- 3 Hung HC, Joshipura KJ, Jiang R, et al. Fruit and vegetable intake and risk of major chronic disease. J Natl Cancer Inst. 2004;96(21):1577-84
- 4 Hall JN, Moore S, Harper SB, Lynch JW. Global variability in fruit and vegetable consumption. Am J Prev Med. 2009;36(5):402-409, e5
- 5 Shields M. Nutrition: findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey. Measured obesity: overweight Canadian children and adolescents. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada; 2005
- 6 Rahman T, Cushing RA, Jackson RJ. Contributions of built environment to childhood obesity. Mt Sinai J Med. 2011;78(1):49-57
- 7 Rahman T, Cushing RA, Jackson RJ. Contributions of built environment to childhood obesity. Mt Sinai J Med. 2011;78(1):49-57
- 8 Health Canada. Canada's Food Guide. <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/basics-base/quantit-eng.php>
- 9 Shields M. Nutrition: findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey. Measured obesity: overweight Canadian children and adolescents. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada; 2005. Retrieved from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-620-m/2005001/c-g/child-enfant/4053588-eng.htm>
- 10 Statistics Canada. Table 105-0501 – Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2013 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database)

