

Provincial Fact Sheets: 2013 – 2014

*New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey
Kindergarten to Grade 5*

Healthy Weights and Lifestyle



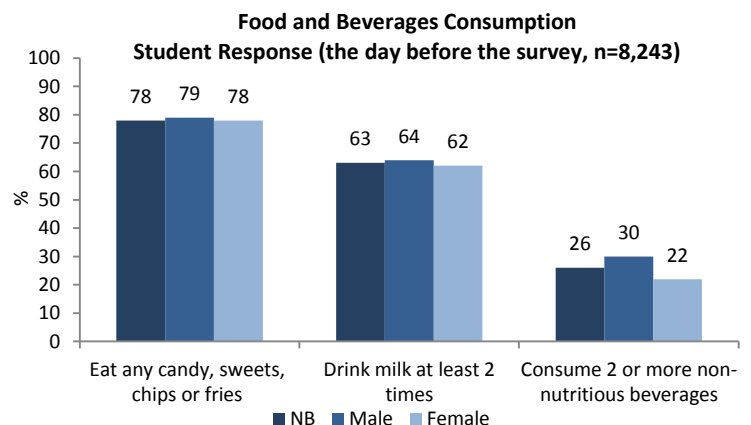
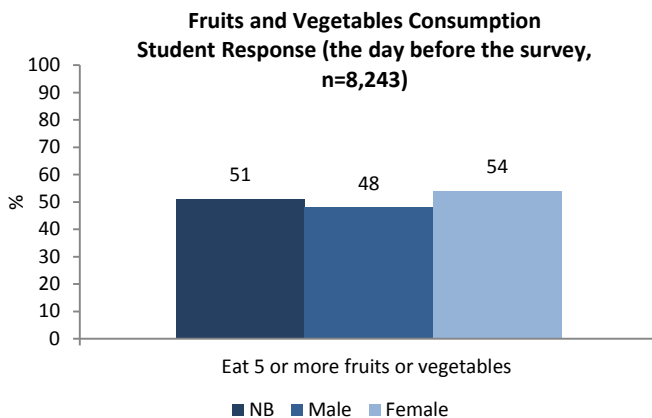
Introduction

Obesity is a growing burden in our society. Rates of obesity have almost tripled amongst young Canadians in the last 30 years.¹ Furthermore, people that develop obesity at a young age have higher chances of being obese when they reach adulthood. Several behaviours are more likely to be associated with healthy weight. These include eating fruits and vegetables, consuming a balanced breakfast every morning, limiting the consumption of non-nutritious foods and screen time, as well as participating in physical activities as much as possible every day.

Eating Behaviors

Fruits and vegetables contain a rich source of essential minerals, vitamins and fiber for our bodies. They can also limit chronic diseases from developing such as: cancer, diabetes, and heart diseases, amongst many other conditions.

- Children and adolescents who eat fruits and vegetables five or more times a day are less likely to be overweight or obese compared to those who consume less of these healthy foods.² Only 51% of Grade 4 and 5 students in New Brunswick reported eating 5 or more fruits or vegetables the day before the survey.



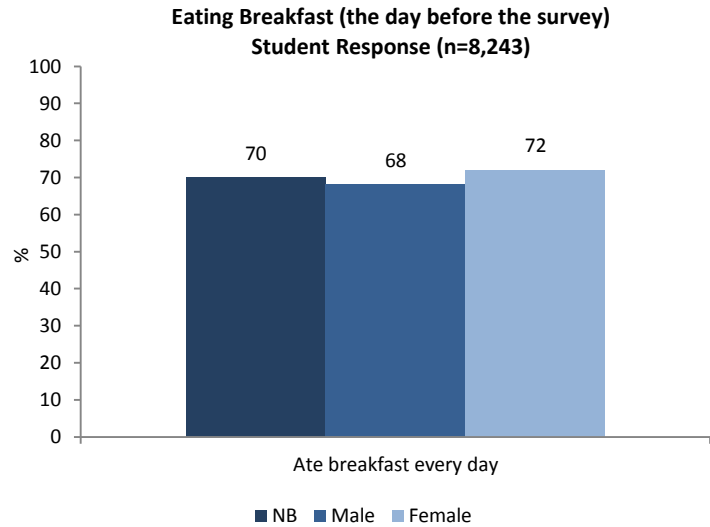
The increase in non-nutritious food consumption present today is one main factor implicated in the spread of the worldwide obesity epidemic.³ Consuming non-nutritious foods increases calorie intake and can lead to being overweight or obese.

Limiting food and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar and salt (sodium) is an important step towards better health and healthy body weights.⁴ Children, in particular, are consuming significantly more added sugars in the form of soft drinks and other sweetened beverages, candy, chocolate bars, etc...⁵

Eating Breakfast

Breakfast is the most important meal that can be eaten in a day. It fuels your energy to start the day and has been shown to improve behavior, mood, and memory.⁶ There is growing evidence that shows skipping breakfast might be linked to weight gain and obesity, particularly in young people.⁷ Taking the time to have a good breakfast every day could also help students perform better at school.⁸

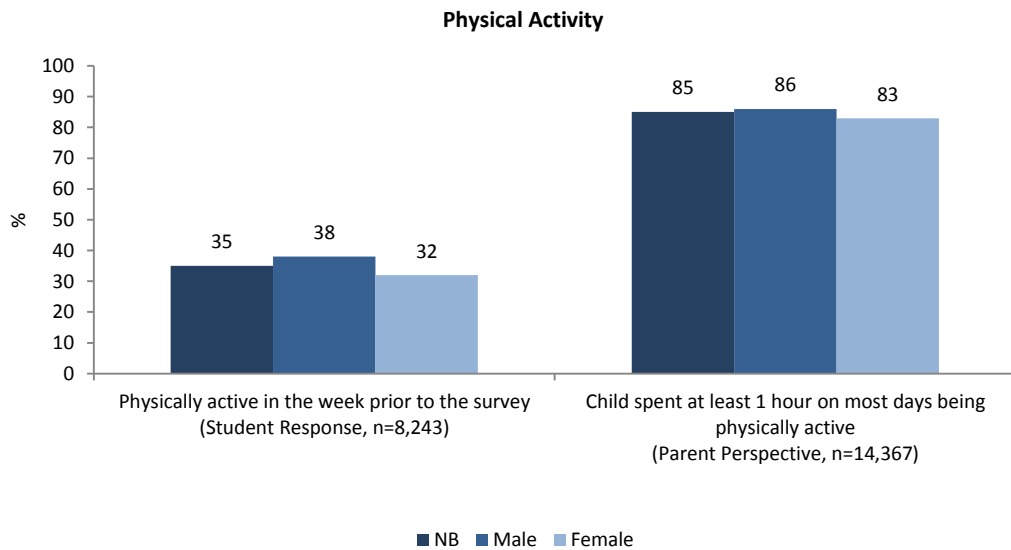
- 70% of students from Grade 4-5 reported eating breakfast every day.
- 35% of students from Grade 4-5 reported eating at a breakfast or snack program at school the week before the survey.



Participating in Physical Activity

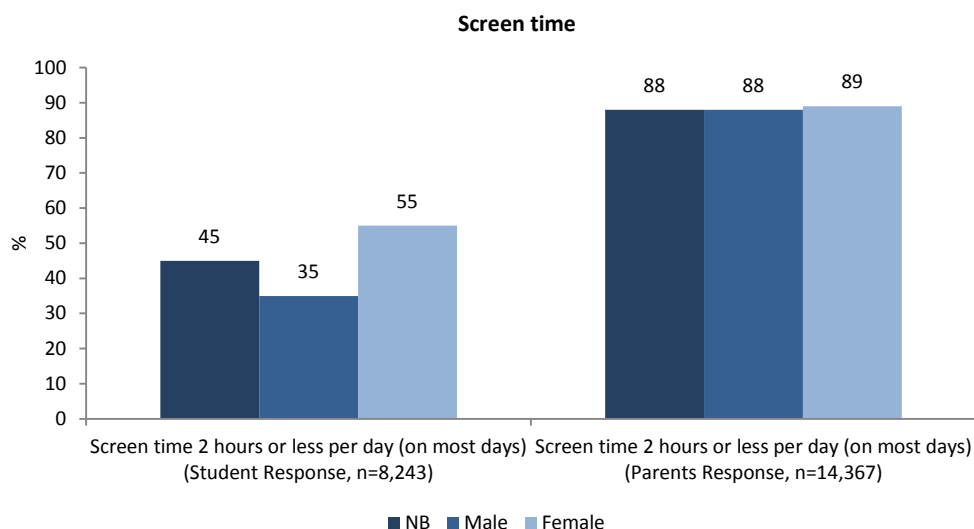
Physical activity enhances both physical and psychological well-being and has even been shown to extend lifespan and improve productivity. Physical activity increases energy levels as well as decreases stress. When asked about their child, 85% of parents said that their child spent at least 1 hour on most days being physically active, while 35% of the students of Grade 4-5 reported spending at least 60 minutes doing hard to moderate physical activity every day. There is evidence that parents often overestimate their child's level of physical activity and this may lead to inaction in promotion of physical activity by parents.⁹

- It is recommended that children should be physically active for a minimum of 60 minutes daily for optimal growth and development.¹⁰



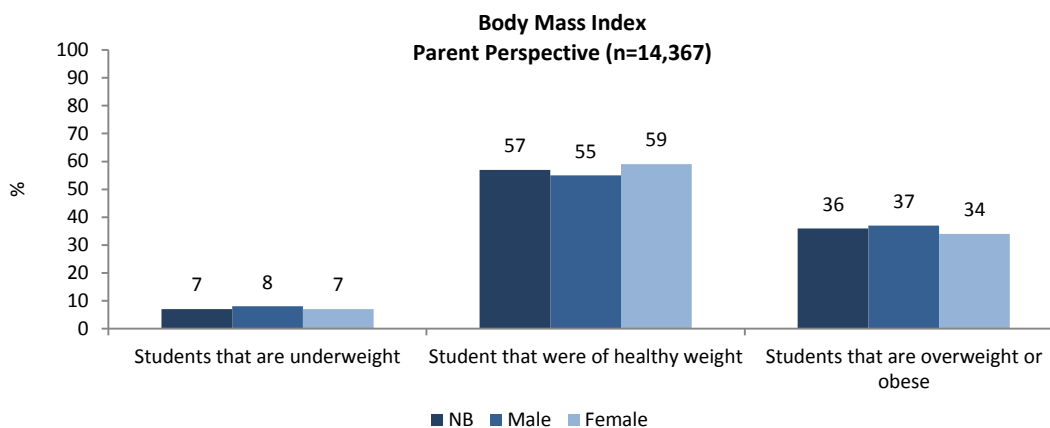
Screen Time

Sedentary behaviours are associated with the development of obesity and metabolic diseases.¹¹ Dependence on screen time after school as a leisure time activity is reducing fitness levels and reducing time that could be spent being physically active. *The Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Youth* call for students to spend no more than two hours per day in sedentary mode such as watching TV or using a computer.¹² Watching TV or playing computer games takes away from time that could be spent being physically active.¹³



Healthy Body Weight

Watching the *types* of food eaten, varying *what* you eat and controlling the *portions* of what's eaten, while remaining *physically active* during the day have all been shown to contribute in lowering the risks of children developing obesity.¹⁴ Healthy body weight can be estimated using the body mass index (BMI), a measure of a person's weight in comparison to their height. International definitions for overweight and obesity state have been established based on the distribution of BMI for males and females at each age.¹⁵ Parents of students in Kindergarten to Grade 5 provided their child's age, height and weight, resulting in the following BMI calculations indicated here below*.



**The 2007 to 2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey found that parents underestimated the height and weight of children aged 6 to 11, which resulted in an underestimate of body mass index (BMI) among children aged 6 to 8 (Shields M., Connor Gorger S., Janssen I. & Tremblay M.S., 2011). Therefore, BMI results should be interpreted with caution.*

Key or selected wellness indicator results and progress from the New Brunswick Elementary Student Wellness Survey

Wellness Indicator	2010-2011 Results	2013-2014 Results	Progress
Children who eat vegetables and fruits at least 5 times each day	51%	51 %	--
Children who regularly consume sweetened non-nutritious beverages	56%	26%	👍
Children who eat breakfast daily	93%	70%	👎
Children who spend at least 60 min each day in a combination of moderate and hard physical activity*	74%	85%	👍
Children who spend 2 hours or less per day in sedentary activities such as watching TV and using computers	39%	45%	👍

* According to Parents Response.

➤ In the 2013-2014 academic year, a provincial sample of 136 (62%) elementary schools completed the student wellness surveys. In total, 8,243 students Grades 4 & 5 and 14,367 parents participated in the survey.

The New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey (NBSWS) is a provincial initiative of the New Brunswick Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities (HIC) in cooperation with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Data collection and analysis is carried out by the New Brunswick Health Council (NBHC) according to their requirements. The purpose of this survey is to examine the health and wellness attitudes and behaviours of students in Grade 4 and Grade 5 and of parents of students in kindergarten to Grade 5.

References:

- Government of Canada. (2013) Child obesity. Retrieved from <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/obesity-obesite/risks-risques-eng.php>
- Tjepkema M. & Shields M. (2005). *Nutrition: Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey Overweight Canadian children and adolescents* (Catalogue 82-620-MWE2005001). Ottawa: Statistics Canada
- Ludwig DS. (2007) Childhood Obesity – The Shape of Things to Come. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 357: 2325-2327. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp0706538. Retrieved from <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp0706538>
- Health Canada. (2007). *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: A Resource for Educators and Communicators*. (Cat.: H164-38/2-2007E-PDF, ISBN: 0-662-44470-1). Ottawa: Publications Health Canada.
- Statistics Canada. (2014) Sugar consumption among Canadians of all ages, retrieved from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2011003/article/11540-eng.htm>
- Canadian Safety Council. (2011) National Safety Campaigns – Start the day off right with breakfast! National School Safety Week. Retrieved from <https://canadasafetycouncil.org/campaigns/start-day-right-breakfast>
- Harvard School of Public Health. (2015) Obesity Prevention Source – Obesity Causes – Food and Diet. Retrieved from <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/obesity-causes/diet-and-weight/>
- Adolphus K, Lawton CL, and Louise D. (2013) The effects of breakfast on behavior and academic performance in children and adolescents. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 7: 425. DOI: 10.3389/fnhum.2013.00425.
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2011) Health Promotion – Healthy Living - Physical Activity. Retrieved from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/index-eng.php>
- World Health Organization (WHO). *The Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation on diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases: process, product and policy implications*. *Public Health Nutrition*, 7(1A):245-250. DOI: 10.1079/PHN2003592. Available online: http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FPHN%2FPHN7_1a%2F51368980004000230a.pdf&code=58fab2ca950d0c9b0244640216120c97
- Statistics Canada. (2014) Physical activity of Canadian children and youth: Accelerometer results from the 2007 to 2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2011001/article/11397-eng.htm>
- Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (2011b). *Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Youth*. Available online: <http://www.csep.ca/english/view.asp?x=899>
- American Dietetic Association (2010). *Childhood Obesity: How to Achieve and Maintain a Healthy Weight in Children and Teens*. Chicago: ADA Evidence Analysis Library.
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2009). *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*. Retrieved from: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/index-eng.php>
- Cole T. J., Bellizzi M. C., Flegal K. M., & Dietz W. H. (2000). Establishing a standard definition for child overweight and obesity worldwide: international survey. *Br Med J* 320:1-6.