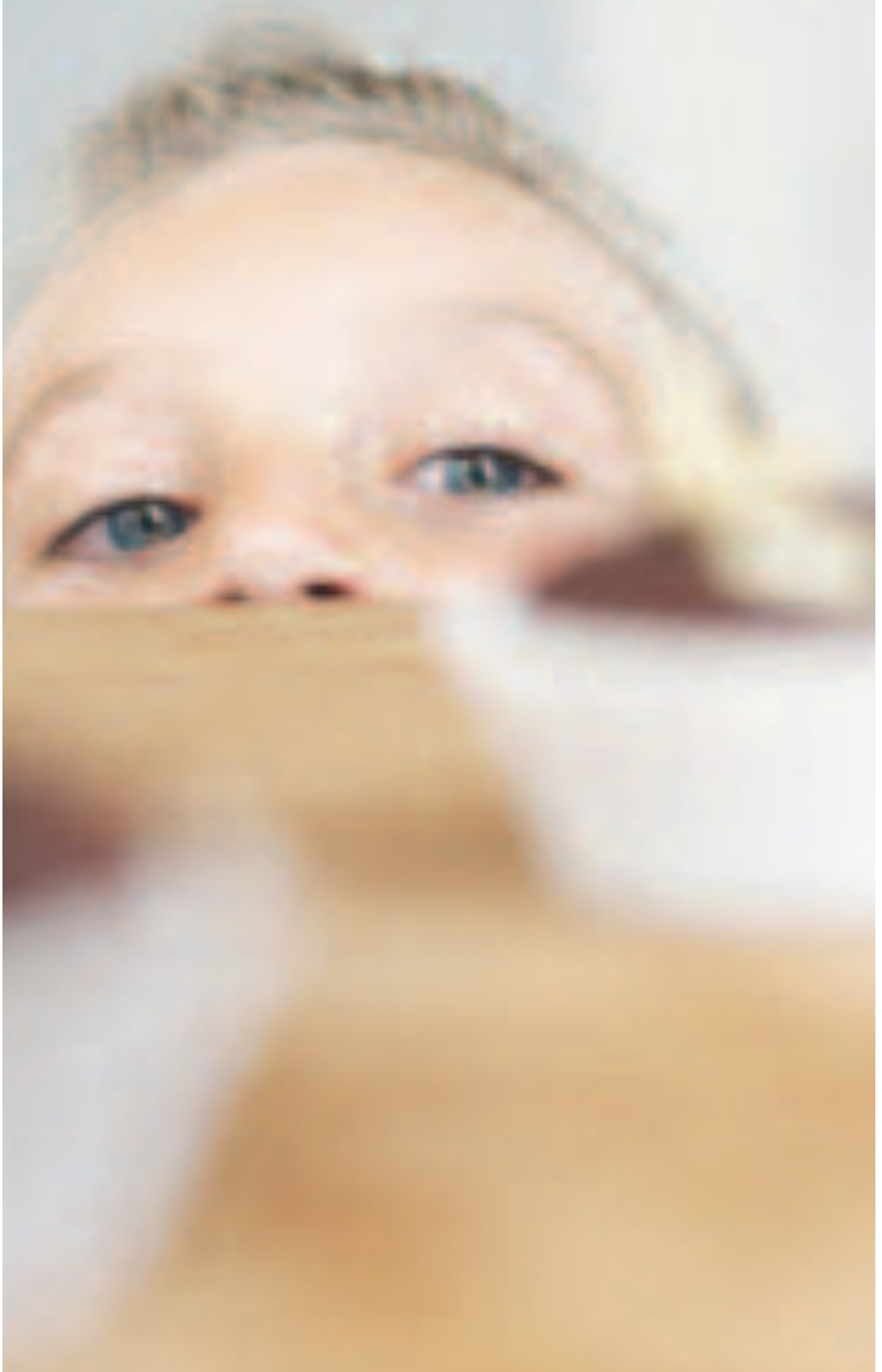


# ROOM TO GROW

2007 REPORT CARD ON NUTRITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN  
BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING



# STILL NOT MAKING THE GRADE

BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING's 2007 *Report Card on Nutrition for School Children* gives Canadian children and adolescents a **D** when it comes to meeting the recommendations of the new 2007 *Canada's Food Guide*.

Our 2007 report looks at children and adolescents aged 4 to 18, to see how well they meet the recommended number of daily servings of Vegetables and Fruit, Milk and Alternatives, and Grain Products. The report highlights some serious areas of concern.

## NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Our 2007 report shows:

- Only 50% of Canadian children and adolescents are getting a minimum number of servings per day of Vegetables and Fruit (excluding French fries). The new *Canada's Food Guide (2007)* recommends a minimum of 5 servings per day for children aged 4 to 8 and 6 or more for children and adolescents aged 9 to 18.
- Only a quarter (25%) are meeting the new *Canada's Food Guide (2007)* recommendations for Grain Products consumption. The minimum is 4 servings per day for children under 9 years of age.

- 28% are eating French fries 2 or more times a week.
- Almost 30% of children and adolescents have 1 or more regular soft drink(s) a day; and 40% have 2 or more servings of fruit juice a day.

## DOING WELL

The good news is that Canadian children and adolescents of all ages are doing well when it comes to their daily servings of Milk and Alternatives.

- 92% of all age groups are getting the minimum number of servings of Milk and Alternatives per day. *Canada's Food Guide (2007)* recommends that all Canadians consume at least 2 servings of fluid milk per day, and those aged 9 to 18 should consume 3 to 4 servings per day of Milk and Alternatives.

Healthy Food Habits 2007	Meeting the Minimum Grade	
	Percentage	Grade
Daily servings of Vegetables and Fruit	50%	D
Daily servings of Grain Products	25%	F
Daily servings of Milk and Alternatives	92%	A
Overall average:	56%	D

Nutrition Challenges 2007	Percentage Consuming
2+ /week servings of French fries	28%
2+ /day servings of fruit juice	40%
1+ /day serving(s) of regular soft drinks	29%

# HEALTHY FOOD HABITS DECLINE AS KIDS AGE

In our 2006 Report Card we compared two groups of children and adolescents – those aged 6 to 12 years and those aged 13 to 17 years. This year, in keeping with the age groupings used in *Canada's Food Guide*

(2007), we looked at three age groups: 4 to 8, 9 to 13, and 14 to 18 years. There is no doubt healthy food habits decline as children become older and the nutrition challenges increase.

Healthy Food Habits 2007	4-8 Years	9-13 Years	14-18 Years
Vegetables and Fruit	C	F	F
Grain Products	F	F	F
Milk and Alternatives	A	A	A

Nutrition Challenges 2007	Percentage Consuming		
2+ /week servings of French fries	23%	27%	34%
2+ /day servings of fruit juice	40%	35%	44%
1+ /day serving(s) of regular soft drinks	16%	28%	43%

## HEALTHY FOOD HABITS

**Vegetables and Fruit:** Younger children (aged 4 to 8) are doing better than older children (aged 9 to 13) and adolescents. Almost 60% of Canadians aged 9 to 18 years are not getting even a minimum number of servings of vegetables and fruit.

**Grain Products:** There was no variation by age. Results of this survey show that children and adolescents are getting less than the minimum daily requirement of servings of grains.

**Milk and Alternatives:** The good news is that most children and adolescents are getting their minimum daily servings of milk and alternatives regardless of age. Consumption drops slightly among adolescents (88%), but milk consumption is still much better than consumption of grain products or vegetables and fruit.

## NUTRITION CHALLENGES

**French fries:** Consumption of French fries increases steadily with age. Among children 4 to 8 years of age, a little less than a quarter (23%) have two or more servings a week. By adolescence, over a third (34%) are having two or more servings a week.

**Fruit juices:** There is no clear relationship between age and excessive consumption of fruit juices. About 40% of Canadian children and adolescents are consuming two or more servings of fruit juice per day.

**Regular soft drinks:** There is a strong relationship between age and soft drink consumption, climbing from 16% among children 4 to 8 years of age to 28% among older children (aged 9 to 13) to 43% among adolescents 14 to 18 years of age. Almost half of Canadian adolescents drink one or more regular soft drinks per day. This is, however, a slight drop from last year.

# NO IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME

This is the second year BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING has developed and released a Report Card on Nutrition for School Children. Its 2006 report gave Canadian children and adolescents an overall grade of C - based on parent's responses to questions about their child's eating habits on an average day.

The 2006 results reflected data from 499 families. The 2007 report was based on a telephone survey of 607 parents with children aged 4 to 18.

Because of the different ages surveyed and the cut-offs used to define the minimum levels for each food group, direct comparison between the 2006 and 2007 reports is difficult. Changes between the two years may reflect the revision of the daily recommended servings for Vegetables and Fruit and for Grain Products in the new *Canada's Food Guide* (2007).

The bottom line is that many of Canada's children and adolescents are still not meeting the minimum standard for Vegetable and Fruit and Grain consumption.

Healthy Food Habits	Meeting the 2006 Minimum Ages 6-17 years		Meeting the 2007 Minimum Ages 4-18 years	
	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade
Daily servings of Vegetables and Fruit *	59%	D	50%	D
Daily servings of Grain Products **	60%	C	25%	F
Daily servings of Milk and Alternatives ***	63%	C	92%	A
Overall average:	61%	C	56%	D

Nutrition Challenges	Percentage Consuming	Percentage Consuming
2+/week servings of French fries	25%	28%
2+/day servings of fruit juice	37%	40%
1+/day serving(s) of regular soft drinks	37%	29%

- \* **Vegetables and Fruit:** For 2006, the minimum number of servings was 4 servings a day for all ages; for 2007, the minimum number of servings is 5 servings a day for children aged 4 to 8, and 6 or more for children and adolescents aged 9 to 18 - excluding French fries.
- \*\* **Grain Products:** For 2006, the minimum was 2 or more servings a day for all ages; for 2007, the minimum number of servings is 4 servings a day for children aged 4 to 8, increasing to 6 for 9- to 18-year-olds.
- \*\*\* **Milk and Alternatives:** For 2006, the minimum was 3 or more servings a day for all ages; for 2007, the minimum number of servings is 2 a day for children aged 4 to 8 and 3 or more for children and adolescents aged 9 to 18.

# REGIONAL DIFFERENCES PERSIST

BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING operates in several communities across the Canadian North and is a leader in Northern childhood nutrition. However, we were unable to collect data on the eating habits of children and adolescents in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon Territory for this report. Isolated studies have shown that the cost of, and accessibility to, a variety of healthy foods can vary considerably across the North and that this can present a significant barrier to healthy diets for children and adolescents.

We also know that nutrition plays an important role in a number of health concerns in many of our Aboriginal communities - including obesity, Type 2 diabetes and deficiencies in essential nutrients such as iron, vitamins D and A, calcium and folate.

Last year, BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING found significant regional differences in the nutrition of children and adolescents. In 2007, regional differences still persist.

Healthy Food Habits 2007 *	Atlantic Prov. **	QC	ON	MB & SK **	AB **	BC **
5+/day servings of Vegetables and Fruit	58%	72%	51%	67%	64%	58%
4+/day servings of Grain Products	24%	25%	25%	41%	26%	24%
2+/day servings of Milk and Alternatives	98%	95%	95%	100%	98%	99%

Nutrition Challenges 2007	Percentage Consuming					
2+/week servings of French fries	33%	26%	33%	27%	19%	34%
2+/day servings of fruit juice	49%	42%	34%	43%	45%	28%
1+/day serving(s) of regular soft drinks	42%	22%	26%	34%	33%	38%

- \* The *Canada's Food Guide* (2007) has different recommendations for each age group. For the regional analysis, the recommendation for children aged 4 to 8 was used as the minimum number of servings for these food groups.
- \*\* Percentages are based on sample sizes less than 100; results should be interpreted with caution.

## HEALTHY FOOD HABITS

**Vegetables and Fruit:** Rates ranged from a high of 72% in Quebec to a low of 51% in Ontario.

**Grain Products:** In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 41% met the minimum standard of 4 or more servings a day. Other regions ranged from 24% to 26%.

**Milk and Alternatives:** In 2007, all provinces are doing a great job when it comes to consuming Milk and Alternatives.

## NUTRITION CHALLENGES

**French fries:** About a third of children and adolescents are eating French fries two or more times a week, ranging from 34% (British Columbia) to 19% (Alberta).

**Fruit juices:** Almost half (49%) of children and adolescents in the Atlantic Provinces drink 2 or more servings of fruit juice a day. The province with the lowest percentage is British Columbia (28%).

**Regular soft drinks:** Atlantic Canada also has a high rate of regular soft drink consumption, leading the country at 42%. Meanwhile, in Quebec the percentage of children and adolescents reporting one or more regular soft drink(s) a day is almost half that of Atlantic Canada (22%).

# HOW WE DID IT

Data for this survey was collected on behalf of BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING, using Maritz Research Omnitel, a random-digit, representative telephone survey of over 2,000 Canadians aged 18 years of age and older.

Due to this specific audience, the actual number of respondents who qualified for this survey was 607. With a sample of this size, results can be considered accurate to within +/- 3.98%, 19 times out of 20.

## CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE RECOMMENDED NUMBERS OF SERVINGS PER DAY

Food Group	4-8 Years (Girls & Boys)	9-13 Years (Girls & Boys)	14-18 Years	
			Females	Males
Vegetables and Fruit *	5	6	7	8
Grain Products	4	6	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	3-4	3-4	3-4

\* *Canada's Food Guide (2007)* recommends that Vegetables and Fruit be consumed more often than juice.

In addition to looking at Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, and Milk and Alternatives, we re-examined three challenges to healthy eating that we first identified in 2006:

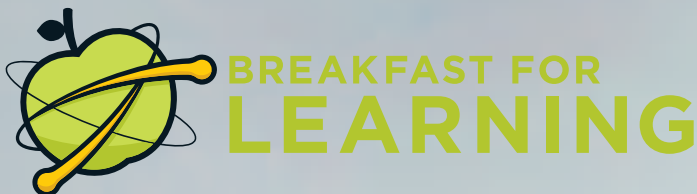
- 2 or more servings of French fries per week (they are high in fat and calories)
- 2 or more servings of fruit juice per day (overconsumption of fruit juice could result in excess calorie consumption)
- 1 or more servings of regular soft drinks per day (soft drinks provide no nutritional value)

## BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING

BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING is Canada's leading national, non-profit organization solely dedicated to supporting child nutrition. Established by a group of forward-thinking editors of *Canadian Living* magazine in 1992, our vision is to ensure that every child in Canada attends school well nourished and ready to learn.

BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING offers funding, resources and expert assistance to school-based breakfast, lunch and snack programs – supporting thousands of programs across the country in every province and territory. Using a made-in-Canada model, BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING works with communities to team up people and organizations from the public, private and volunteer sectors to address local child nutrition and hunger challenges.

Businesses, foundations, government agencies and thousands of individual Canadians generously fund BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING. This financial support helps to deliver nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack programs in hundreds of communities across Canada. You can help by visiting [www.breakfastforlearning.ca](http://www.breakfastforlearning.ca) and making a donation to BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING or by volunteering to help or by making a donation to your local school program.



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