



CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP  
AGAINST CANCER  
PARTENARIAT CANADIEN  
CONTRE LE CANCER

## Policy Actions to Prevent Cancer - Webinar Series

# Healthy Eating and Cancer in Canada: Current research and policy actions

Maureen Dobbins, Scientific Director, National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools  
Stephanie Hopkins, Business Development Analyst, National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools  
Benjamin Rempel, Senior Analyst, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

MARCH 27, 2023

# Land Acknowledgement

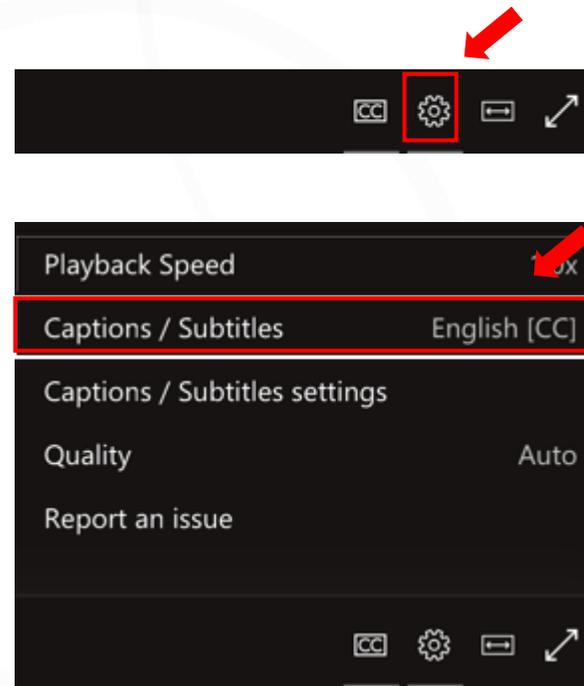


# Housekeeping

- Subtitles and translation are available during the webinar
- Please use the Q&A function to ask questions for the presenters
- Recording and slides will be shared following the webinar

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## Submit Questions

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# Agenda

Item	Presenter
Welcome and Topic Introduction	Benjamin Rempel
Presentation of Research Evidence	Dr. Maureen Dobbins Stephanie Hopkins
Presentation of Policy Interventions	Benjamin Rempel
Facilitated Discussion, Q&A session	Participants
Closing and Evaluations	Benjamin Rempel

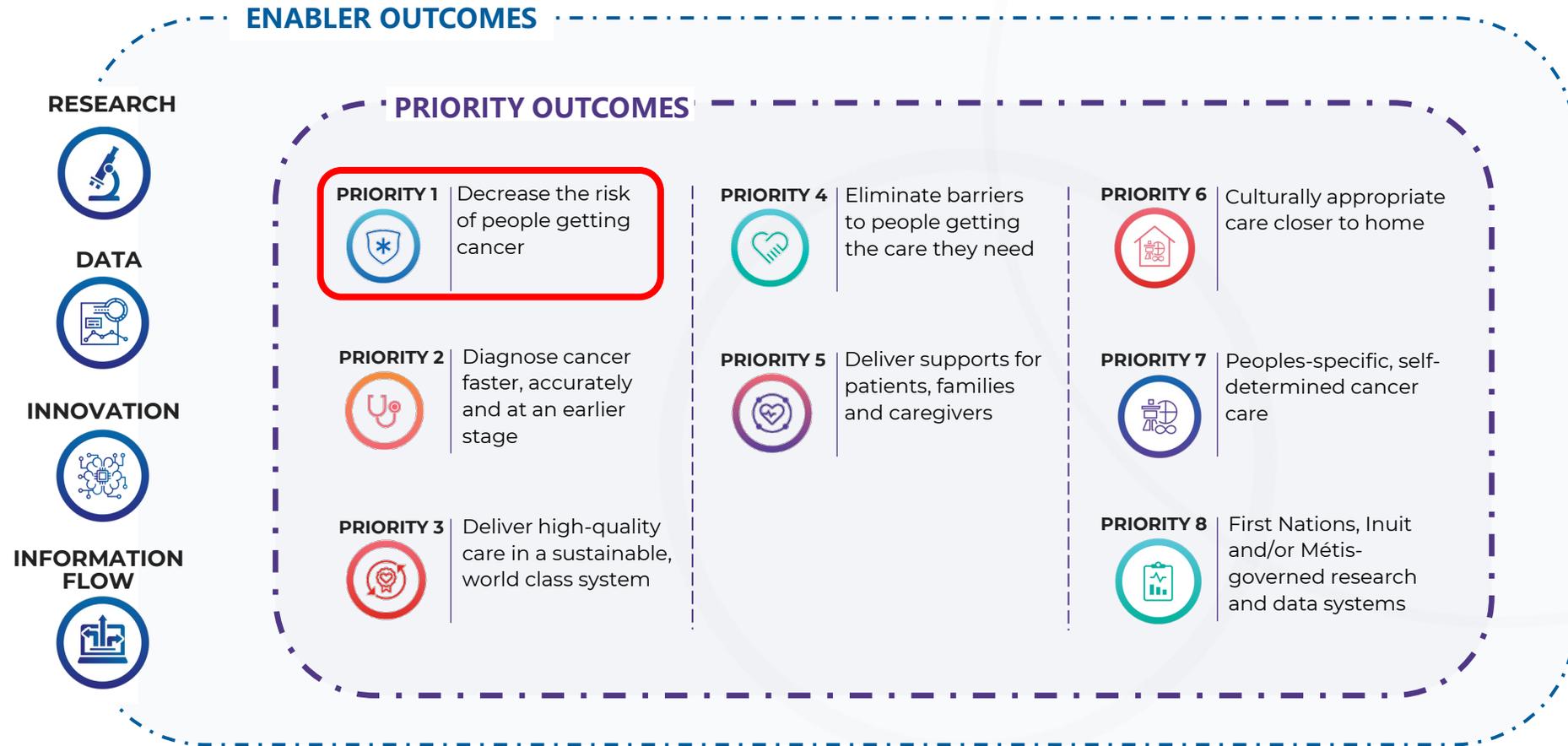
# Webinar Objectives

- Increase knowledge of healthy eating and cancer prevention research and policy guidance at the provincial, territorial, and municipal levels.
- Build awareness of population health approaches to increase healthy eating through policy interventions and community mobilization.
- Investigate the influence of policy changes during the COVID-19 pandemic on healthy eating-related issues.



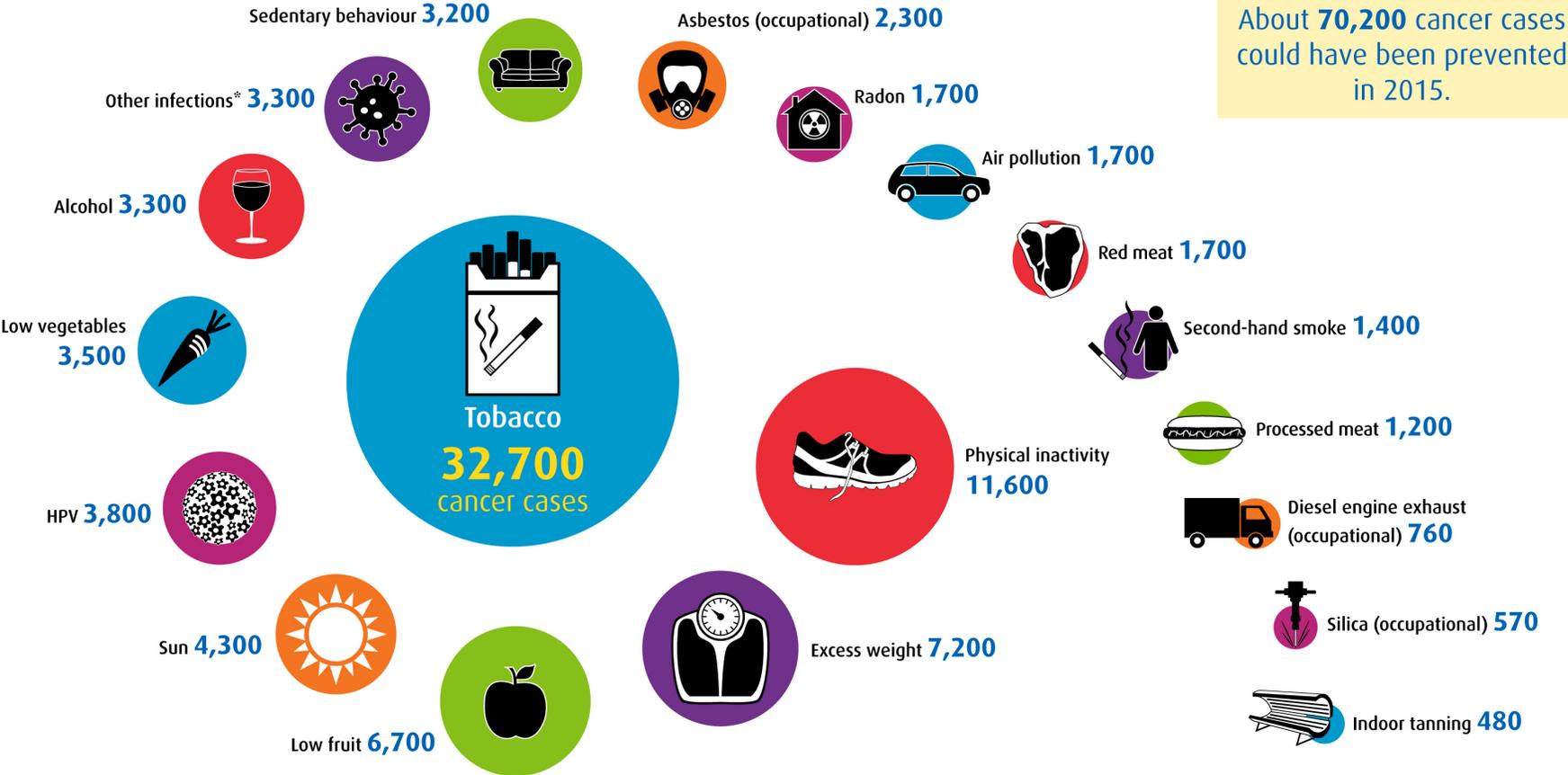
# Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

## 2019-2029 Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control



# Number of cancer cases that could be prevented in Canada

About 4 in 10 cancer cases can be prevented through healthy living and policies that protect the health of Canadians.



Not all risk factors have the same impact on cancer risk. **This image shows the number of cancer cases diagnosed in 2015 that are due to key modifiable risk factors.**\*\*

\*Other infections category includes Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria (*H. pylori*), human herpesvirus type 8 (HHV-8) and human T-cell leukemia/lymphoma virus type 1 (HTLV-1).  
 \*\*See website for details on data and risk factor definitions.

# Healthy eating and cancer in Canada Resource now available!

## ➤ **Latest Research:**

- The link between healthy eating and cancer
- Review of effective policies
- Research grounded in the World Cancer Research Fund's (WCRF) NOURISHING Framework

## ➤ **Canadian Policy Analysis:**

- A review of healthy eating and nutrition policies across P/T/M in Canada

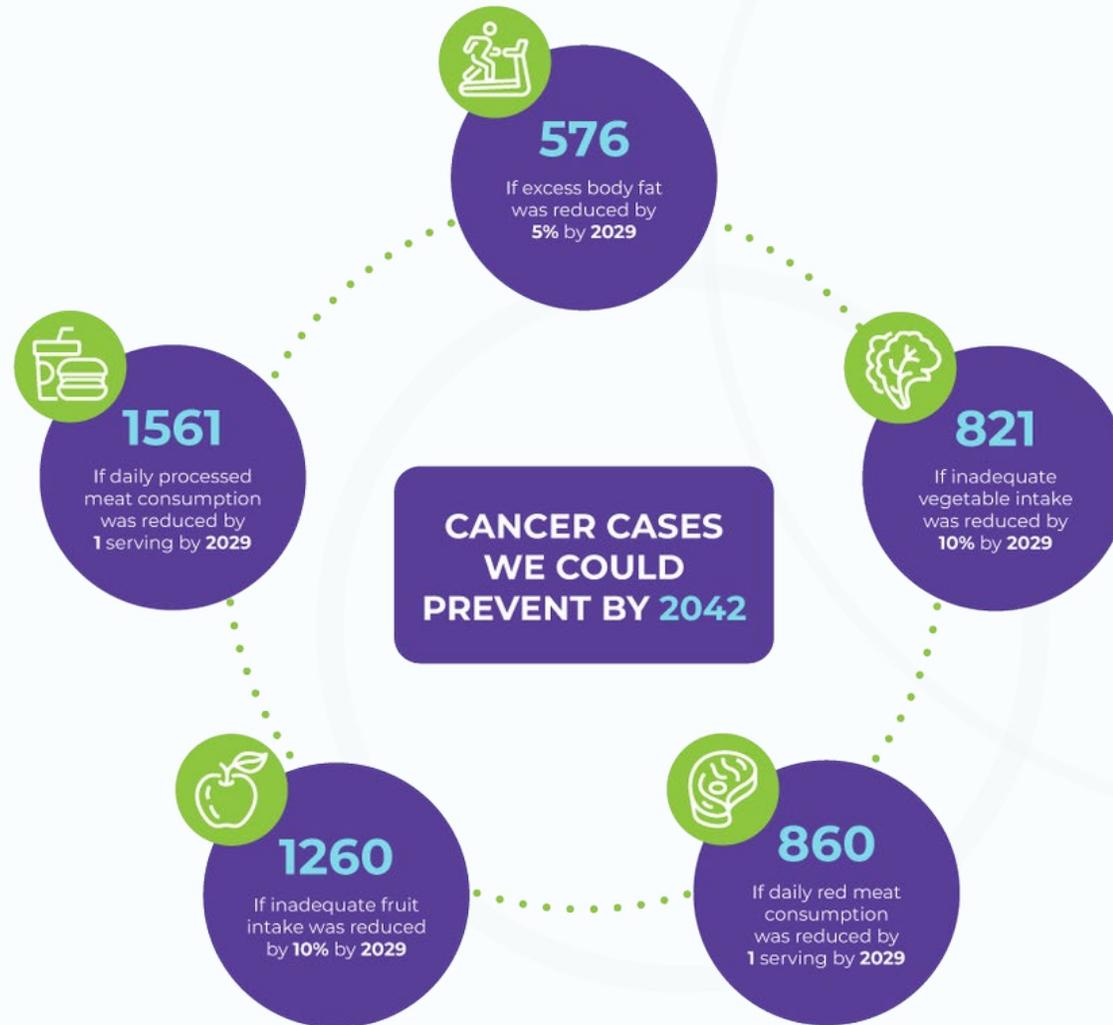


# Healthy eating and cancer in Canada

- Healthy diets can reduce the risk of developing several types of cancer.
- Healthy diets consisting of adequate fruit and vegetable consumption reduce the risk of developing **esophageal, stomach, lung, pancreatic, and prostate cancer**.
- Unhealthy diets high in sugars, saturated and trans-fats, low-fibre foods, and high-sugar drinks increase the risk for **endometrial, breast, and colorectal cancers**.
- Cancer causes considerable economic and public health pressures on the healthcare system, while impacting individual, social, financial, and psychosocial factors.



# Healthy eating and cancer in Canada



<https://www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca/topics/healthy-eating-policies/>

# POLL

**Which cancers are related to healthy eating:**

- a. Esophageal
- b. Stomach
- c. Lung
- d. Pancreatic
- e. Prostate
- f. All of the above



# Presenters



**Maureen Dobbins,  
Scientific Director, NCCMT**



**Stephanie Hopkins, Business  
Development Analyst, NCCMT**



# Rapid review: what are effective policy and program initiatives to increase healthy eating and/or reduce unhealthy heating for cancer prevention?

Presented by:

Stephanie Hopkins, MPH

March 27, 2023

Maureen Dobbins, RN PhD FCAHS

Prepared by:

The National Collaborating Centre for  
Methods and tools

Funded by:

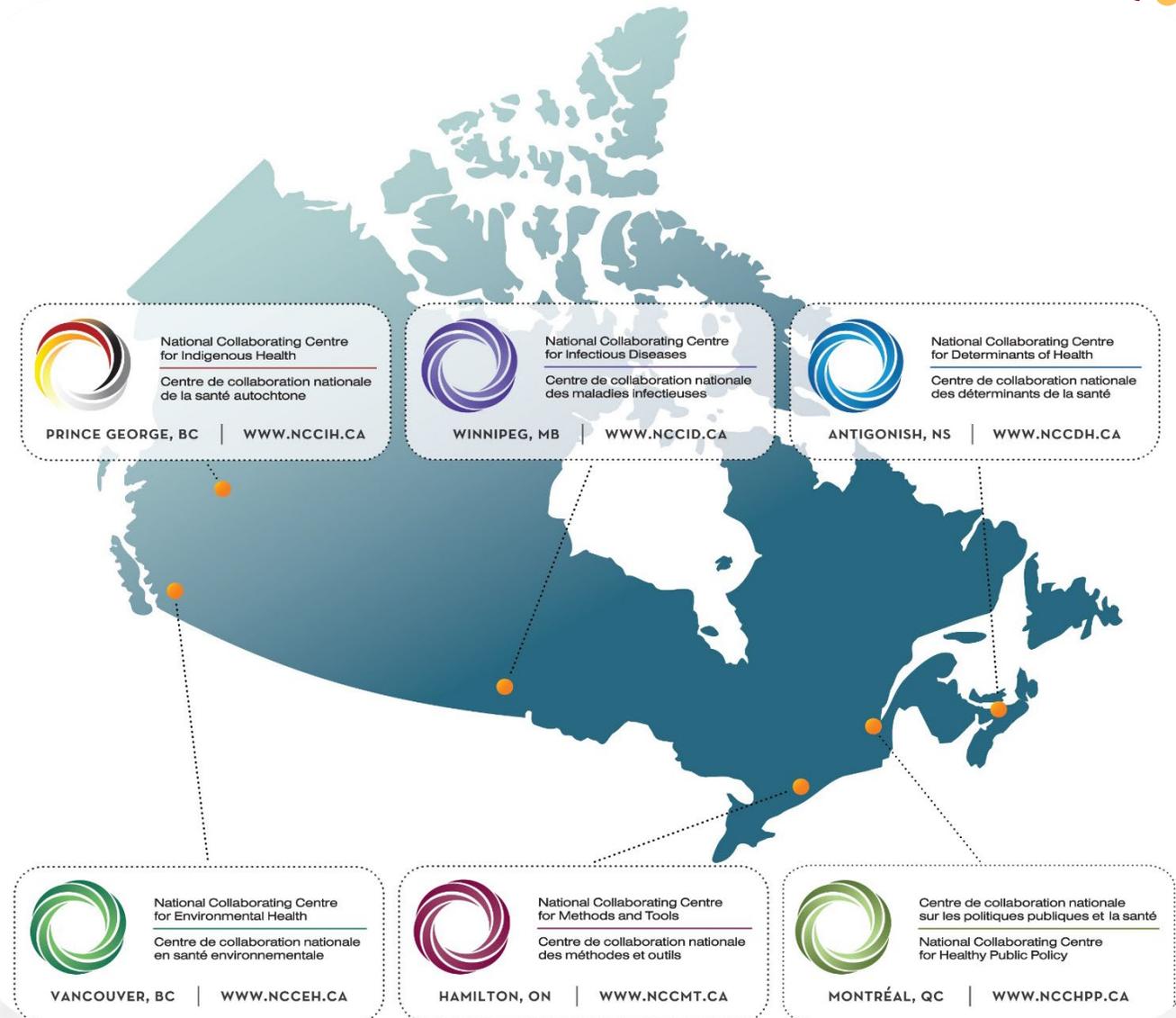
The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

Review link:

<https://www.nccmt.ca/pdfs/cpac>

# The National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools

- 1/6 National Collaborating Centres funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
- Encourages and scales evidence-informed decision making
- Provides high-quality resources, real world training and practical mentorship



# Methods: Research Questions

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## Primary Question:

- What are effective policy and program initiatives to increase healthy eating and/or reduce unhealthy eating for cancer prevention?

## Secondary Questions:

- What evidence exists for cost-effectiveness or cost-savings associated with successful implementation of effective interventions?
- Are their differential impacts of interventions among diverse populations?

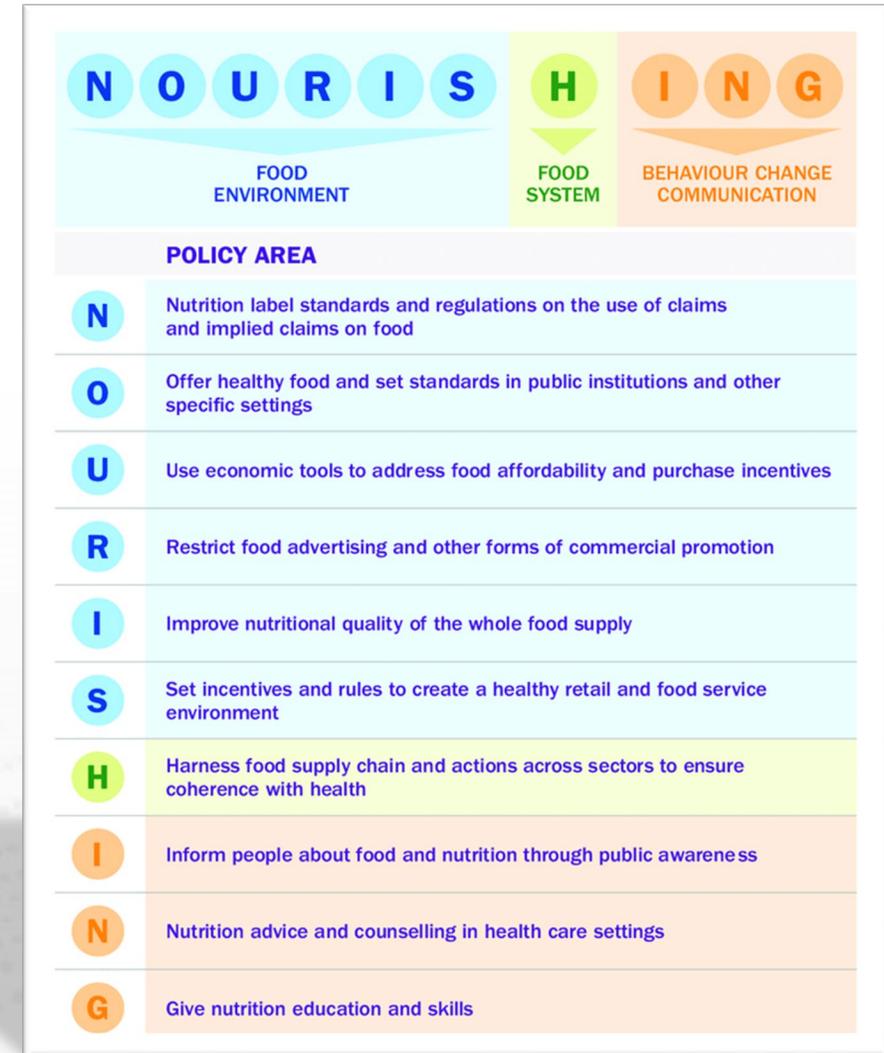
# Methods: Search Strategy

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- Databases searched: Health Evidence™ from January 1, 2012, until May 31, 2022, limited to those reviews with a high-quality rating.
- Each systematic review undergoes a quality appraisal using the Health Evidence™ quality assessment tool.
- The outcomes of the evidence were appraised using the GRADE systematic approach to rating the certainty of evidence.

# NOURISHING Framework

- An established framework by which policy evidence can be systematically categorized, updated, interpreted and then communicated.
- Provides options within the framework that allow policymakers flexibility to shape a response suitable for their national/local contexts.



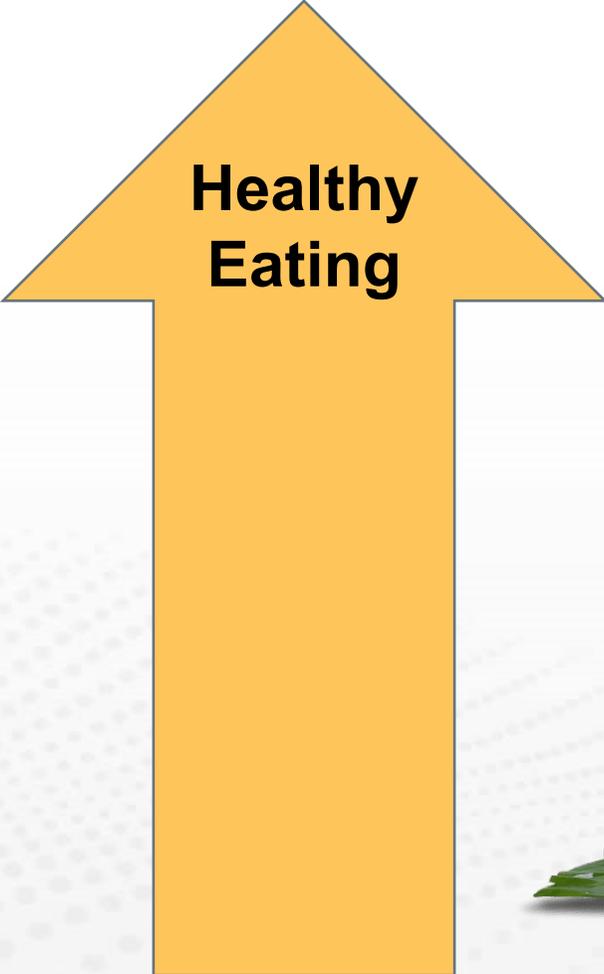
# Interventions to increase healthy eating

n= 24 reviews

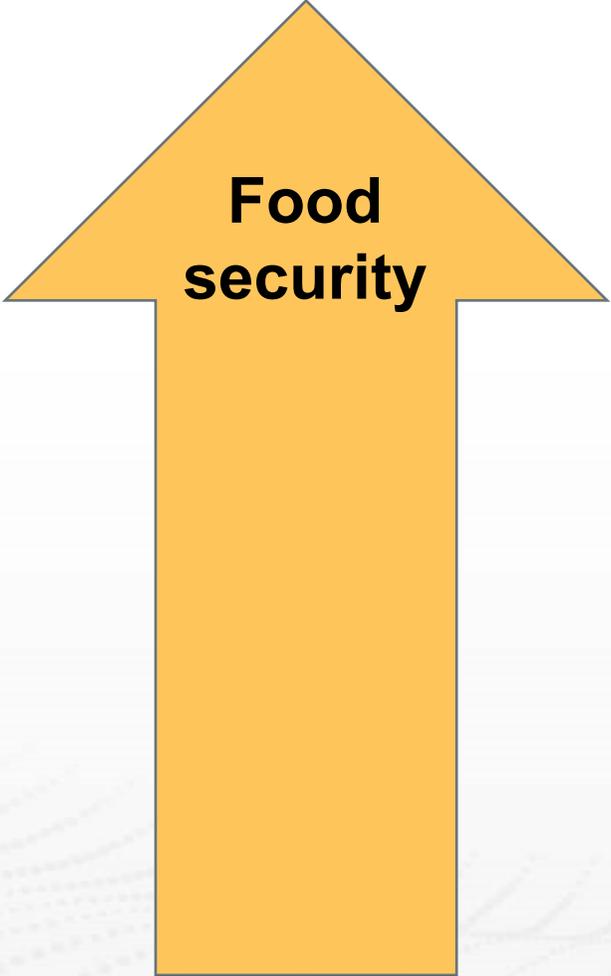


<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

# Food Labelling | Front-of-package labelling

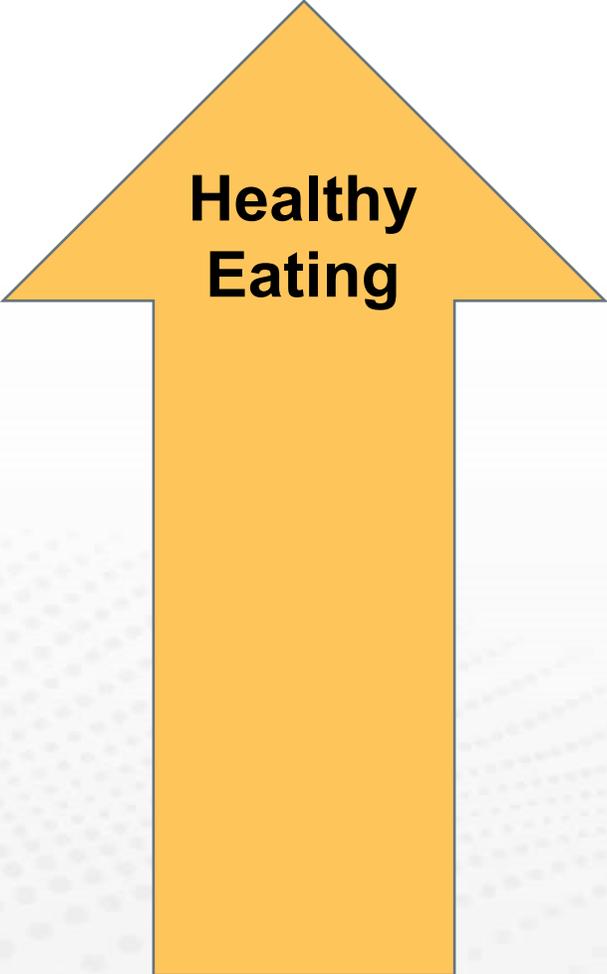


# Food Provision | Direct food provision



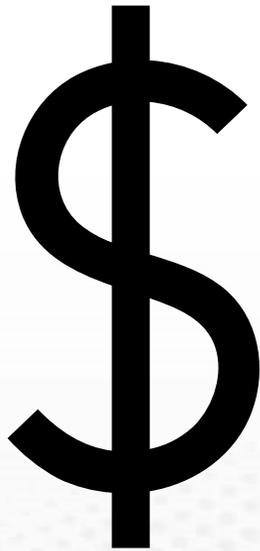
# Food Provision | Increased meal standards

n=11 (8 healthy eating; 4 unhealthy eating)



# Food pricing | Subsidies

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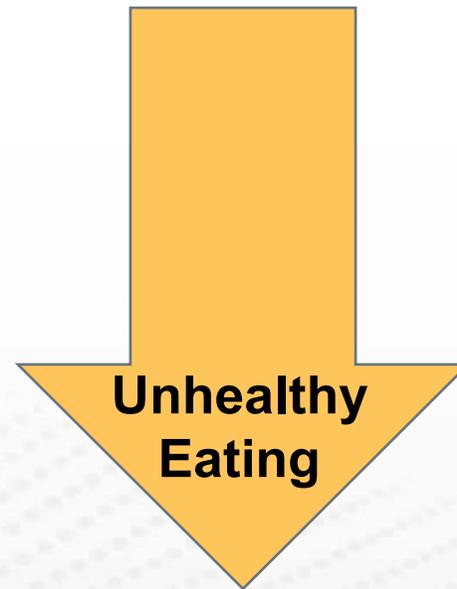


# Interventions to reduce unhealthy eating

n= 27 reviews

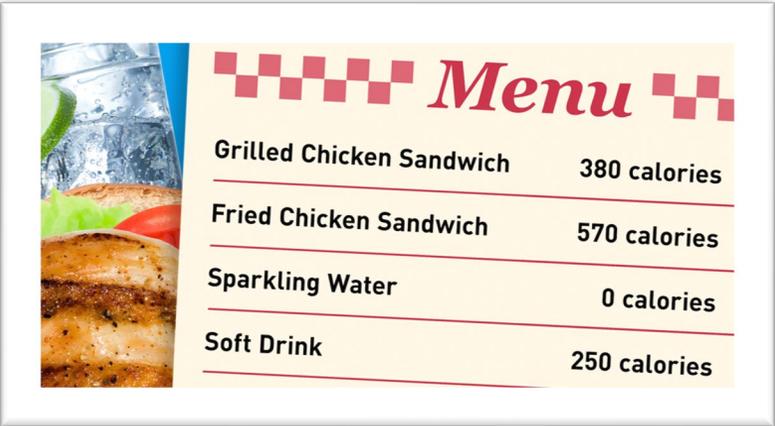


# Food Labelling | Front-of-Package Labelling

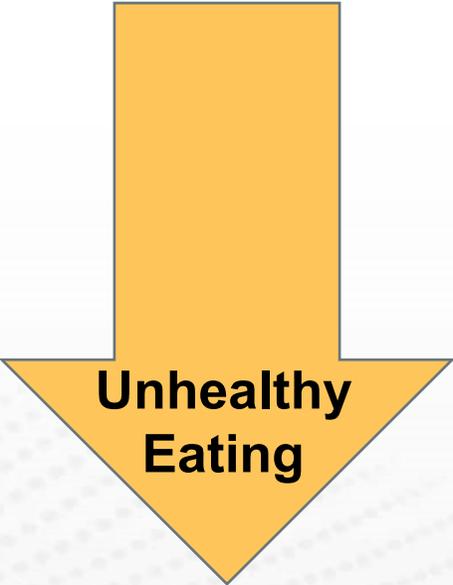


- Calories
- Trans-fatty acids (TFA)
- Saturated fats

# Food Labelling | Menu labelling



Menu	
Grilled Chicken Sandwich	380 calories
Fried Chicken Sandwich	570 calories
Sparkling Water	0 calories
Soft Drink	250 calories



- Energy purchased (kcal)

Per 100g	
242 kCal	Fat MED
	Saturates HIGH
48 mins walk	Sugars LOW
	Salt MED

A typical dish is 220g (533Kcal)

# Food Labelling | Sugar sweetened beverages labels



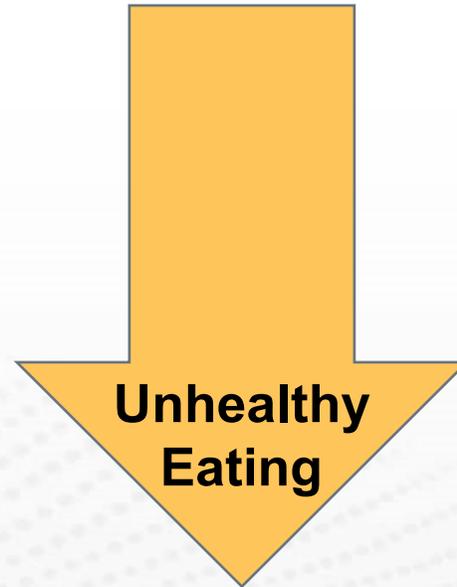
**WARNING:** Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) contributes to obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay.



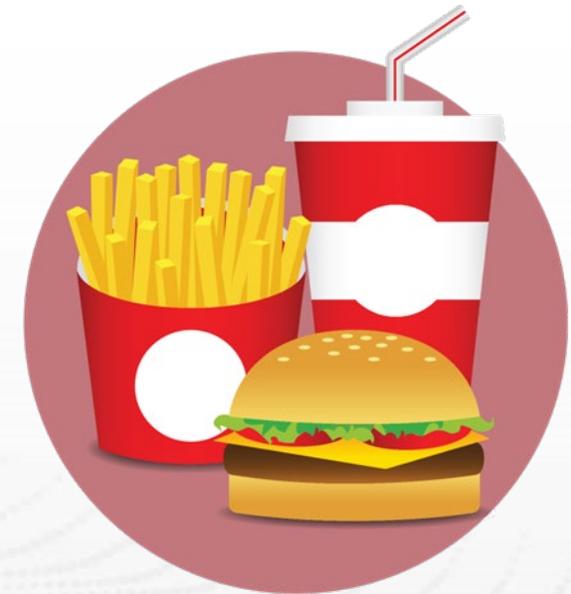
**Sugar Sweetened Beverage (SSB) consumption & sales**



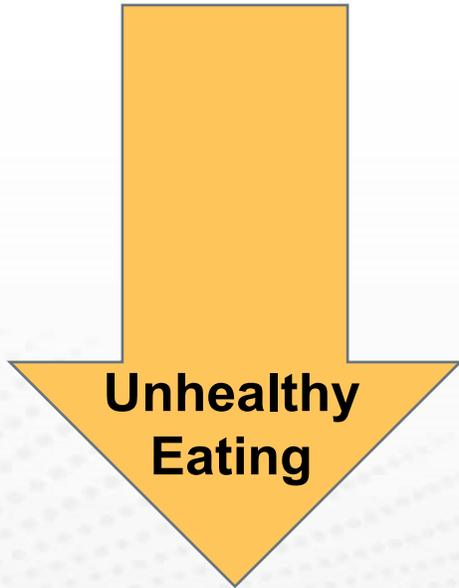
# Food Provision | Direct food provision



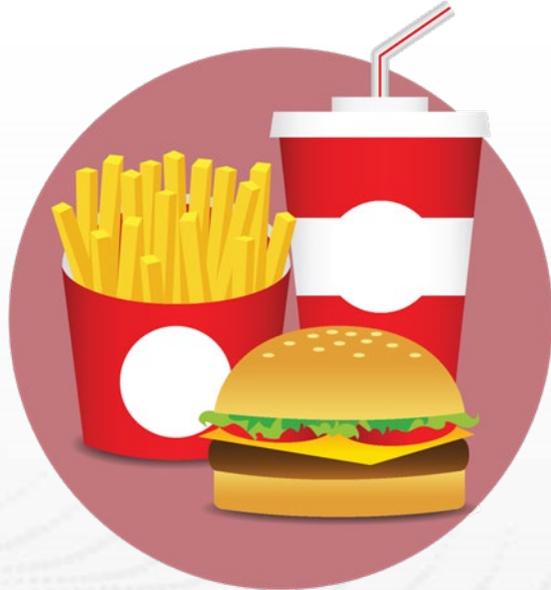
**Consumption of unhealthy snacks and SSBs**



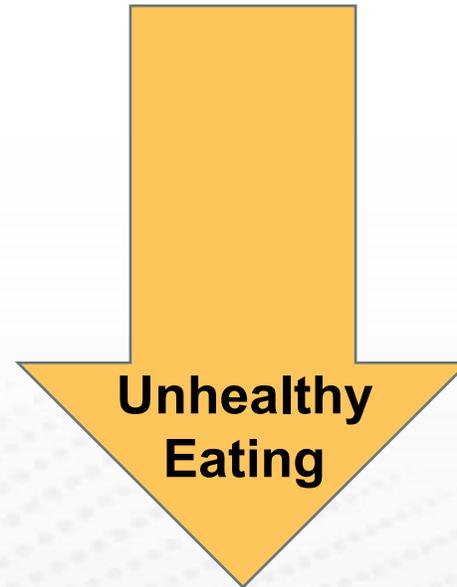
# Food Provision | Increased meal standards



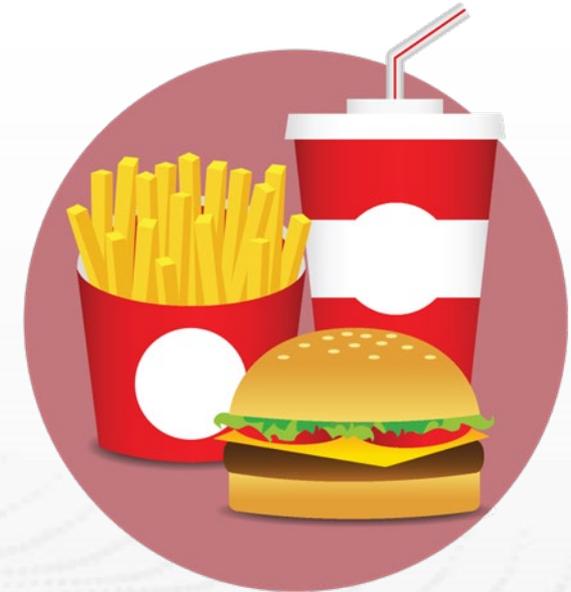
**Consumption of fats, unhealthy snacks and SSBs**



# Food Provision | Limiting food competition

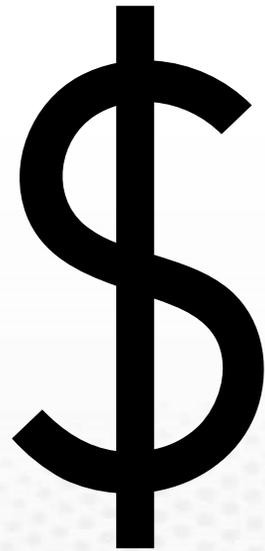


**Consumption of unhealthy snacks and SSBs**



# Food pricing | Taxation

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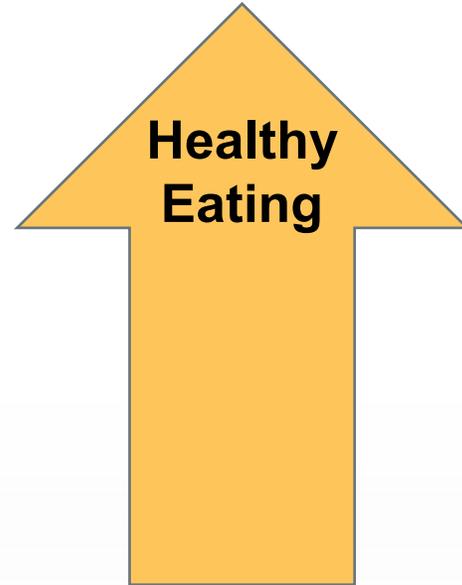


**SSB Sales**

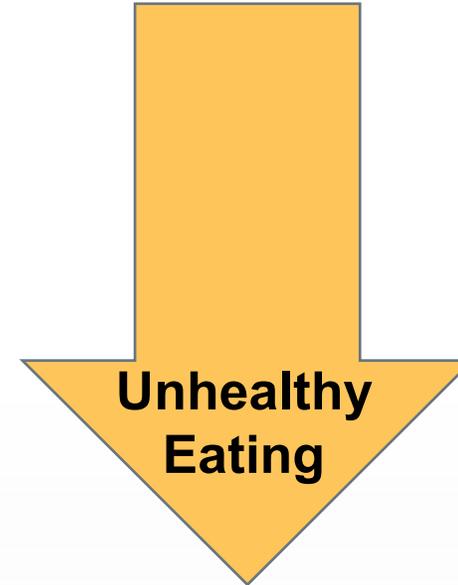


# Other interventions with strong evidence

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- Direct food provision of fruits and vegetables in workplaces
- Farmers' markets
- In-store architecture
- Local municipal incentives



- Healthier default food retail menu items for children
- Federal government incentives

# Food Labelling

**STOP DRINKING**

ENERGY DRINK

COFFEE & TEA

Cola

Drinks that contain caffeine

**THINK & LIMIT**

Flavoured MILK

FRUIT JUICE

Sugar Added!

Fizzy Drink

Drinks high in sugar content

**DRINK PLENTY**

WATER

PLAIN MILK

Drinks necessary for growth & development

≠

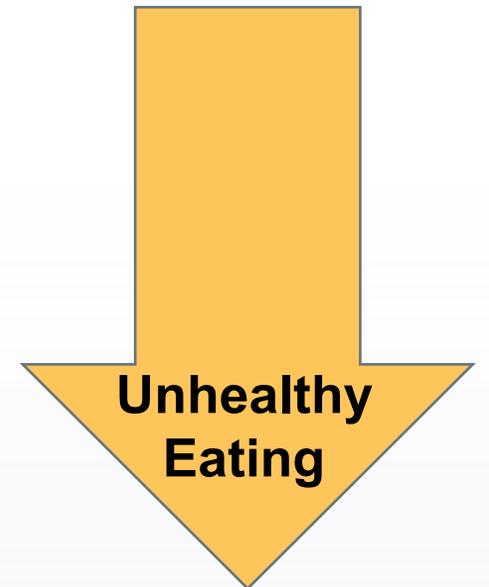
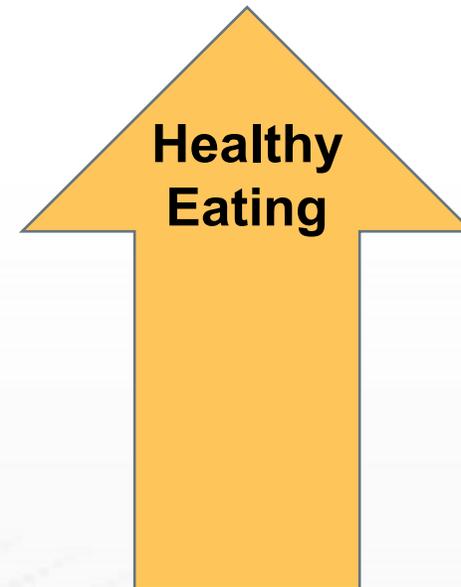
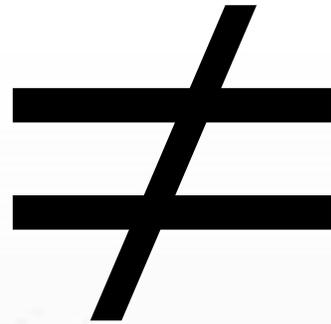
## SSB sales in vending machines



# Other interventions with limited evidence

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- Farmers markets in low-income areas
- Mass media campaigns
- Planning restrictions to limit sales in urban and remote communities



# Limitations & Implications

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- Caution: this review represents the best evidence. Population level policy intervention studies have inherently high risk of bias however, this should not prevent policy makers from acting.

## **Methodological Limitations:**

- The search was comprehensive, but not exhaustive. It is unlikely that additional studies would significantly change the results of the current review.
- The search was limited to English language only, this may have overestimated the true intervention effect size.
- Search results were limited to high income countries however it is unlikely that interventions in low-to-middle income countries would have generalizability to the audience of this review.

# Next Steps

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- This review highlighted a suite of policy-type interventions that could be implemented to increase healthy eating and reduce unhealthy eating, which in turn may reduce population cancer levels.
- Future research should take a health equity approach, evaluate the impact of policy evaluations of nutrition on diverse populations in differing contexts and settings, as well as cost-effectiveness.
- Need for evidence examining the impacts of COVID-19 on nutrition and knowledge and perceptions of the relationship between nutrition and cancer risk.
  - E.g., how to re-prioritize healthy eating as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Poll question



To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

**Government policy interventions to increase healthy eating and/or reduce unhealthy eating should be a priority as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.**

1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Somewhat disagree
4	Neither agree nor disagree
5	Somewhat agree
6	Agree
7	Strongly agree



## Additional links to reviews referenced in the Q&A session:

Structural interventions that affect racial inequities and their impact on population health outcomes: a systematic review

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-022-14603-w>

Prevalence of household food insecurity

<https://www.nccmt.ca/rapid-evidence-service/22>

Food insecurity during lockdown

<https://www.nccmt.ca/covid-19/covid-19-evidence-reviews/197>

# Healthy Eating Policies

- Healthy eating policies involve legislation, regulations, guidelines, provincial and territorial policies, bylaws, and municipal plans.
- Food environment policies, such as food provision in schools, food labelling initiatives, food reformulation, and restrictive food retail policies, are effective in increasing healthy eating and decreasing unhealthy eating.
- A noticed gap were healthy eating policies focused on addressing health inequities to better nutrition outcomes. Different policy approaches may be needed across different settings and different populations and be guided by a health equity approach.

# Healthy Eating Policies

Policy domain	Description	Emphasis given to policy domains at provincial/ territorial levels	Emphasis given to policy domains at a local level
<b>Food prices</b>	Food prices, as a policy action, refer to policies that lower the consumer cost of food and help make healthy eating choices easier, cheaper, and more accessible.	Medium	Medium
<b>Food provision</b>	Food provision, as a policy action, refers to healthy food service policies implemented in government-funded and private settings to encourage healthy food choices.	High	High
<b>Food retail</b>	Food retail, as a policy action, refers to government intervention to support the availability of healthy foods and to limit the availability of unhealthy foods in communities (outlet density and locations) and in-store (product placement).	Low	Medium
<b>Food promotion</b>	Food promotion, as a policy action, refers to the promotion and advertising of unhealthy foods across all media.	Medium	Low
<b>Food composition</b>	Food composition, as a policy action, refers to government systems that encourage processed foods and out-of-home meals to be nutrient-rich and of a healthy composition (e.g. limited sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, added sugar).	Low	Low
<b>Food labelling</b>	Food labelling, as a policy action, refers to government regulatory systems that direct labelling on food packaging and menu boards to prevent misleading claims and to enable consumers to make informed food choices.	Low	Low

LOW = no or very few provincial/territorial and municipal jurisdictions have adopted evidence-informed policy action, and/or the breadth of the policy action is limited in scope  
 MEDIUM = some, but not all provincial/territorial and municipal jurisdictions have adopted evidence-informed policy action, and/or the breadth of the policy action is incomplete  
 HIGH = most provincial/territorial and municipal jurisdictions have adopted comprehensive evidence-informed policy action

# Healthy Eating Policies: Food Prices

- Most P/T have policies related to food prices, including a nation-wide tax exemption for certain groceries and prepared food items.
- Several municipalities have policies to make healthy food more accessible and affordable and several communities have outlined plans to increase food security.

## Opportunities for Action:

- **Expand tax policies**, while including health equity considerations for those experiencing food insecurity.
- **Expand food price policies** – including healthy food subsidization.



# Healthy Eating Policies: Food Provision

- All P/T have policies related to food provision and most cite Canada's Food Guide as a benchmark for healthy food options.
- Many municipalities encourage healthy eating through food provision.

## Opportunities for Action:

- Greater emphasis on **individual or cultural preferences** and practices.
- Consult on the **National School Food Policy** and national school nutritious meal program.



# Healthy Eating Policies: Food Retail

- Other than regulating food sales in schools, very few P/T have enacted policies regulating food retail.
- Many municipalities rely on official community plans to govern retail and outlet locations.

## Opportunities for Action:

- Improve **access to healthy food** in retail settings or restaurants.
- **Regulate unhealthy food retail** in settings like recreational or healthcare facilities.



# Healthy Eating Policies: Food Promotion

- Most P/T have policies governing food promotion, many with a focus on promoting local produce and discouraging heavily-sweetened foods.
- Few municipalities have promotion or education policies or regulations to discourage marketing of unhealthy foods.

## Opportunities for Action:

- Enact stricter policies that **restrict junk food advertisement.**
- Enact **food promotion policies** specific to individual regions.
- Support restrictions of marketing to children.



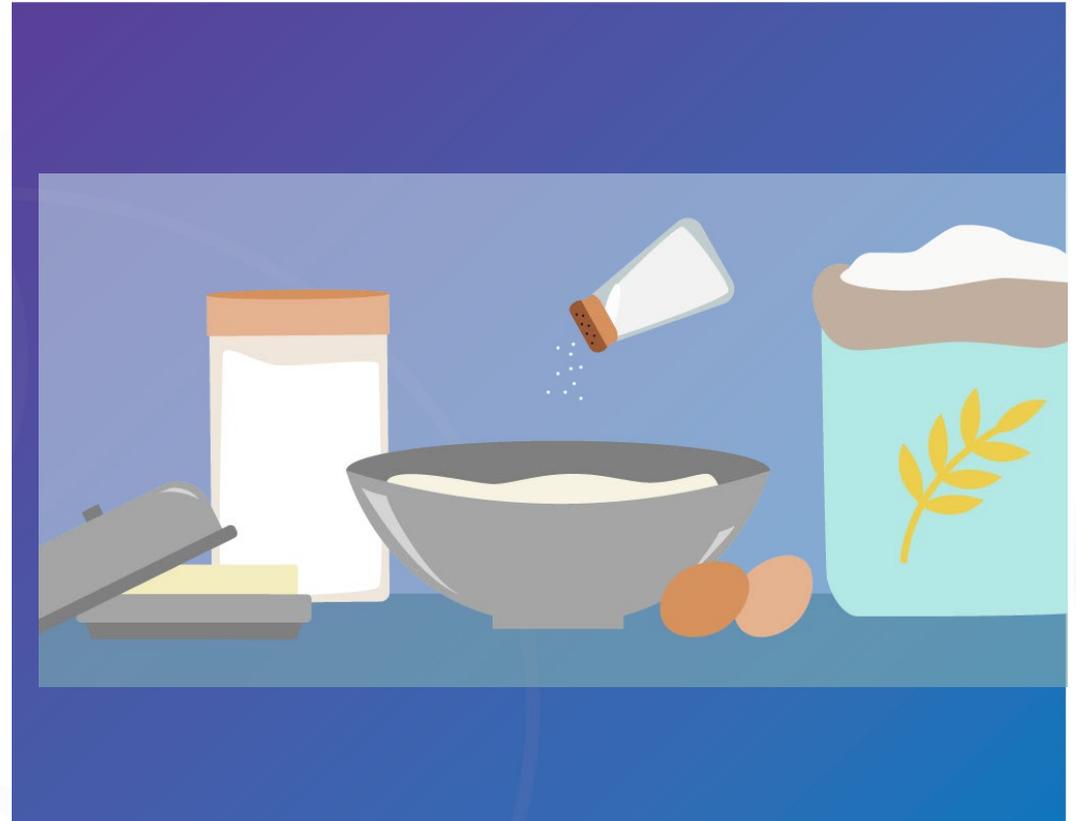
# Healthy Eating Policies: Food Composition

- No P/T were found to have policies targeting food composition.
- Very few municipalities target food composition.

*The findings above are expected as food composition regulations fall under federal jurisdiction such as bans on trans fats.*

Opportunities for Action:

- **Restrict foods high in sodium and sugar** in community settings.



# Healthy Eating Policies: Food Labelling

- Very few provinces have adopted food labeling policies for healthy eating
- Very few municipalities were found to regulate food labeling and healthy eating.

*The findings above are expected as food labeling actions are generally influenced federally.*

Opportunities for Action:

- Mandate **labels to disclose sugar and fat**
- Identify healthy menu options
- Support **front-of-package labelling** systems.



# POLL

- **Food retail, as a policy action, refers to?**
  - a. policies that lower the consumer cost of food and help make healthy eating choices easier, cheaper, and more accessible.
  - b. government intervention to support the availability of healthy foods and limit availability of unhealthy foods.
  - c. government systems that encourage processed foods and out-of-home meals to be nutrient-rich and of a healthy composition.
  - d. promotion and advertising of unhealthy foods across all media.



# Discussion: Healthy eating and cancer in Canada

**Please post your questions for panel members in the Q&A section.**



**Thank you for attending! Please complete the evaluation!**

