




THE NILE EXPLORER BUS
HEALTH & SAFE SPACES COMPONENT:

EATING THE RIGHT FOODS

A stylized, light blue silhouette of a city skyline with several buildings of varying heights, positioned behind the title.



Having a balanced diet in childhood and adolescence is important for proper growth and development and to prevent various health conditions. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025*^{external icon} recommend that people aged 2 years or older follow a healthy eating pattern that includes the following:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Whole grains.
- Fat-free and low-fat dairy products.
- A variety of protein foods.
- Oils.

These guidelines also recommend that individuals limit calories from solid fats (major sources of saturated and trans fatty acids) and added sugars, and reduce sodium intake.

Benefits of Healthy Eating For School Going Children

Healthy eating can help students achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, consume important nutrients, and reduce the risk of developing health conditions such as;

- Protein-Energy Malnutrition (Kwashiorkor and/or Marasmus)
- Rickets
- Iron deficiency.
- Dental caries (cavities)

Nutrition/Diet and Academic Performance

Schools are in a unique position to provide students with opportunities to learn about and practice healthy eating behaviors. Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function (especially memory), reduced absenteeism, and improved mood.

Adequate hydration may also improve cognitive function in children and adolescents, which is important for learning.



Strategies to Enhance Healthy Nutritious Habits For Teachers

- Coordinate healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices through a school health council and school health coordinator.
- Assess healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices.
- Use a systematic approach to develop, implement, and monitor healthy eating and physical activity policies.
- Provide access to healthy foods and physical activity opportunities and to safe spaces, facilities, and equipment for healthy eating and physical activity.
- Establish a climate that encourages and does not stigmatize healthy eating and physical activity.
- Create a school environment that encourages a healthy body image, shape, and size among all students and staff members, is accepting of diverse abilities, and does not tolerate weight-based teasing.
- Provide nutritious and appealing school meals outside the traditional carbohydrate-protein diet. (Posho & beans)
- Ensure that all foods and beverages sold or served outside of school meal programs are nutritious and appealing.

Resources and Reading Material

- a. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025*[external icon](#)
- b. [School Nutrition Environment | Healthy Schools | CDC](#) (CDC school Nutrition Environment)
- c. [School Health Guidelines | Healthy Schools | CDC](#) (School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity)