

# Healthy Eating Environment: A Call to Action

The Alberta Coalition for PrevenTION and Control of Vascular Disease  
(**ACTION**) Network

Adapted from Nutrition Services

*Healthy Eating Environment: Healthy Eating Starts Here Steps to a Healthier You 2014*

# Objectives

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By the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

1. List / identify how the environment impacts food choices
2. Identify strategies to improve eating environments to promote health
3. Describe the importance of advocating for healthy eating environments

# Overview

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- What is eating healthy?
- What prevents us from healthy eating?
- What is a healthy eating environment?
- How does the environment impact healthy eating?
- Challenges and solutions to healthy eating
- Will advocacy for healthy public policy have an impact?

# What is Healthy Eating?

## Healthy Eating:

A way of eating that emphasizes healthy food choices, variety and portion sizes consistent with Canada's Food Guide.



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# What prevents us from healthy eating?

# What Prevents Us From Healthy Eating?

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- Many people think that individuals are **solely** responsible for their own eating behaviours.
- However, evidence shows that the **environment** plays a part in what, where, when and how we eat.

*“We can only resist the food environment so long before giving into temptation.” (Curitti, 2011)*

# What Prevents Us From Healthy Eating?

## Common reasons:

- Increasing variety of food choices
- Increasing portion sizes
- Subconscious / automatic eating



# What Prevents Us From Healthy Eating?

## Common reasons:

- Food prices
- Celebrations and holidays





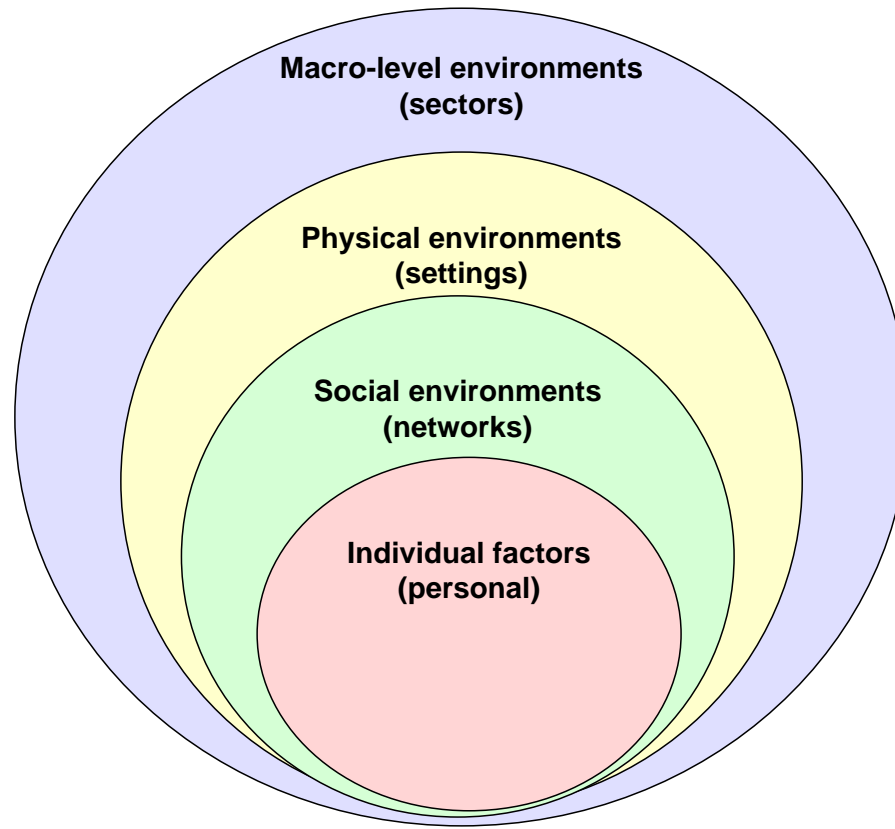
# What is a Healthy Eating Environment?

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## Healthy Eating Environment

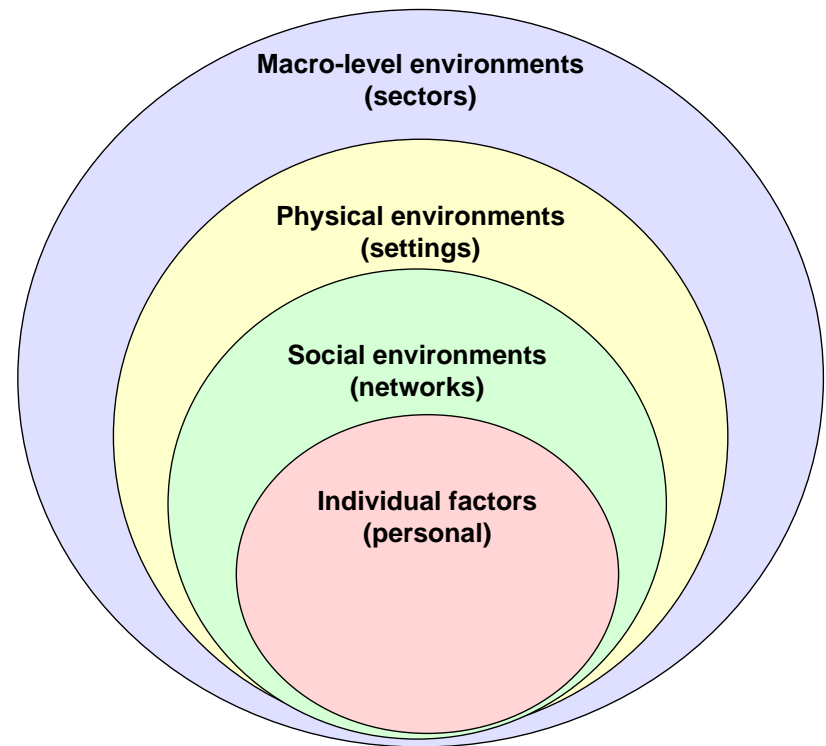
- is a setting which makes choosing healthy eating easy for everyone. This includes:
  - Having leadership and organizational values that support healthy eating
  - Physical spaces that provide a place to eat, water fountains, food facilities, etc.
  - Having healthy food options available at all times

# Types of Environments



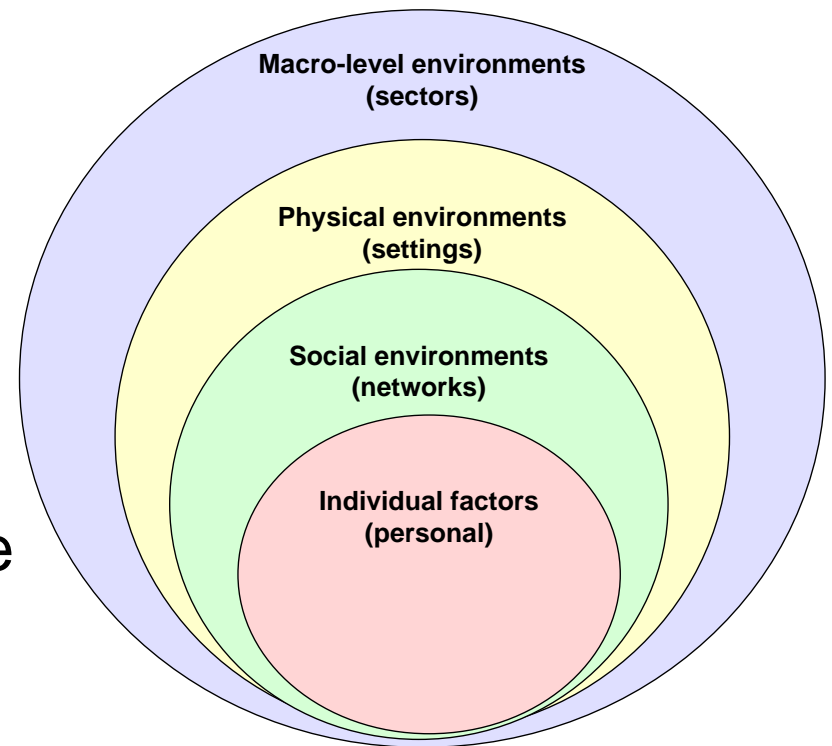
# Types of Environments

- Environment influences our choices
- We can have control over **some factors** in our environments

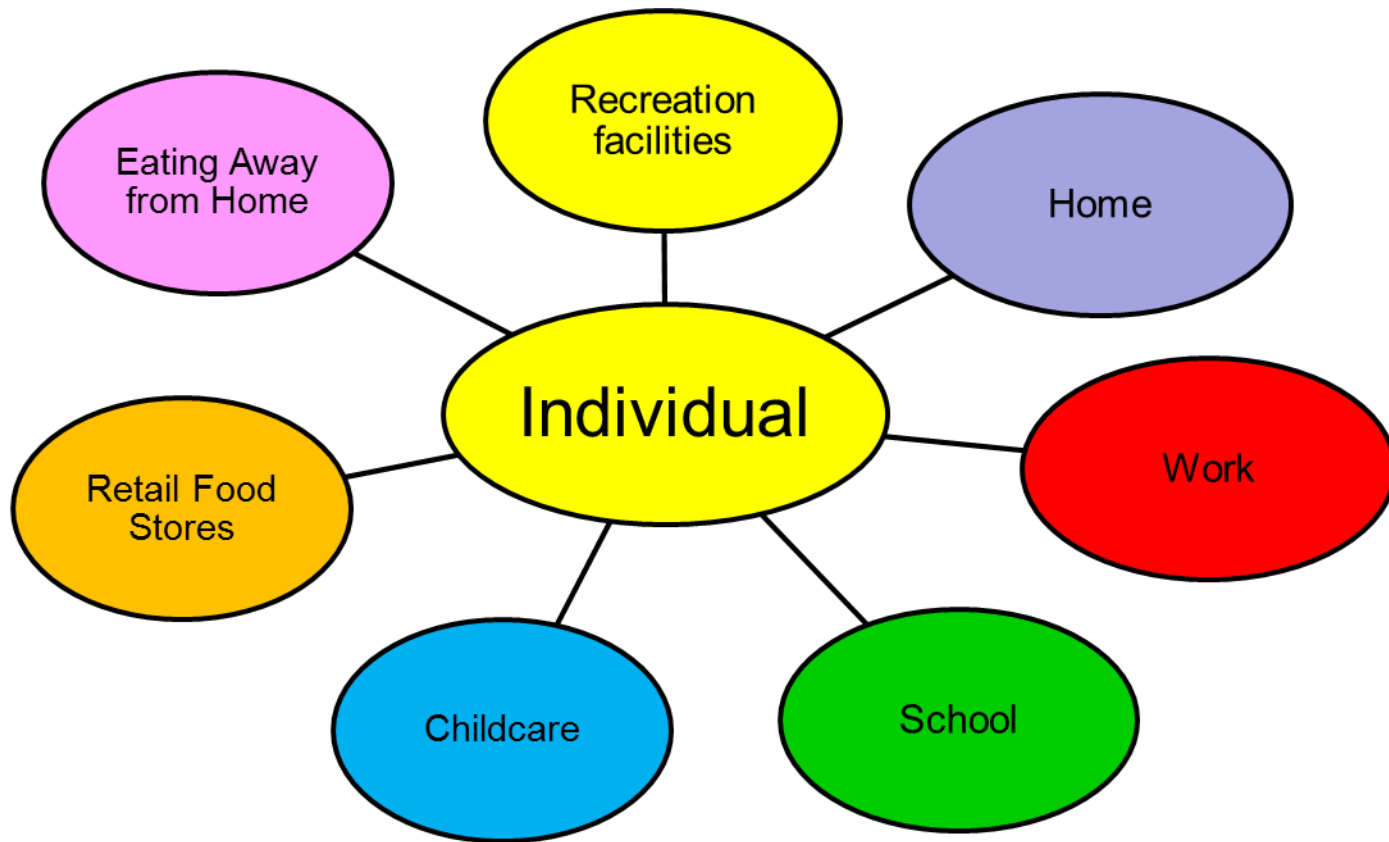


# Types of Environments

- There are some factors in our environments that we have **less control** over
- It is important to be aware of these factors so we can find ways to manage them



# Environments Affecting Food Choices



# Healthy Eating at Recreation Facilities

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- Recreation facilities are often the cornerstone of many communities.
  - Activities
  - Gatherings/ celebrations
- Food is offered in
  - Vending machine
  - Cafeterias
  - Activity programs
  - Catering/ special events

# Challenges to Healthy Eating at Recreation Facilities

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## Eating choices are influenced by:

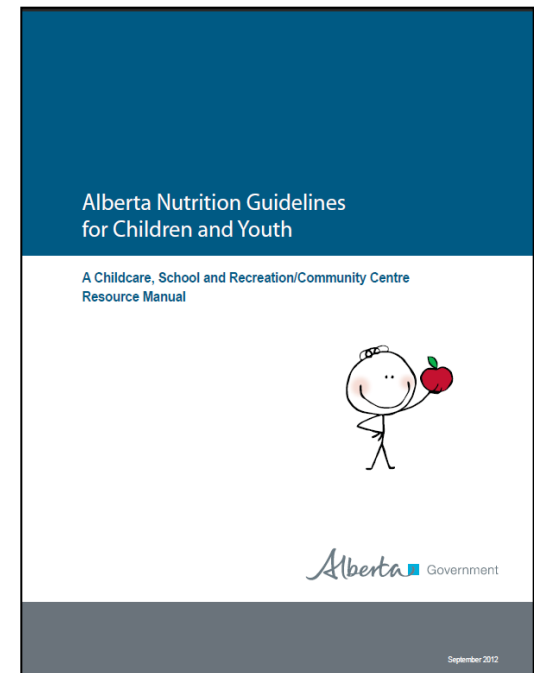
- Catering menus for meetings and parties
- Food available in vending machines, cafeteria and concession stands
- Foods offered for community or promotion events
- Food rewards
- Food offered for bagged day camp lunches or snacks

# Solutions for Healthy Eating at Recreation Facilities

Recreation centres can offer healthy foods and beverages.

Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth: A childcare, school and recreation/community centre resource manual

<http://www.healthyalberta.com/NutritionGuidelines-Sept2012.pdf>





# Solutions for Healthy Eating at Recreation Facilities

- Ask vendors for healthy food and drink options in healthy portions (vending machines, cafeterias, concession)
- Offer non-food rewards or giveaways
- Promote healthy eating at programs or events
- Offer healthy food choices at community or promotional events
- Ask for healthy food and drinks options from caterers
- Ask for appliances (fridge, microwave) and an eating area (lunch room) to help support staff with healthy eating
- Advocate for a healthy food environment policy at your facility

# Challenges to Healthy Eating at Work

**Employed Canadians spend at least 60% of their waking hours at work**



**Eating choices are influenced by:**

- Social norms and cues
- Food availability
- Shift work

# Challenges to Healthy Eating at Work

## Eating choices are influenced by:

- Food based celebrations/rewards
- Catered meetings and events
- Stressful work environment
- Vending machines, convenience stores, cafeterias



# Solutions for Healthy Eating at Work

- Decide if food is needed at each meeting / gathering and if so **choose healthy options**
- Ask for healthy options in cafeterias / vending machines
- Start a worksite health promotion program



# Solutions for Healthy Eating at Work

- Ask for appliances (fridge, microwave) and an eating area (lunch room) to help support healthy eating
- Ask for support from co-workers and management



# Solutions for Healthy Eating at Work

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- Bring your own meals
- Take meal and rest breaks



- Keep a supply of healthy foods at work
- Drink water or other healthy drinks

# Challenges to Healthy Eating at School

- Amount of time to eat
- Available food choices



# Challenges to Healthy Eating at School

- Vending machines
- Pricing
- Location of convenience stores, fast food restaurants, etc.
- Fundraisers / special events





# Solutions for Healthy Eating at School

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Students can  
bring healthy lunches  
and snacks from home



# Solutions for Healthy Eating at School

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Schools can decide to offer healthy food and beverages for special food days, sports days, tournaments and classroom celebrations



# Solutions for Healthy Eating at School



Resources to assist with changing the school environment are found at [www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca)

# Challenges to Healthy Eating at Child Care

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- Menu variety
- Mealtime environment
- Role modeling

# Challenges to Healthy Eating at Child Care

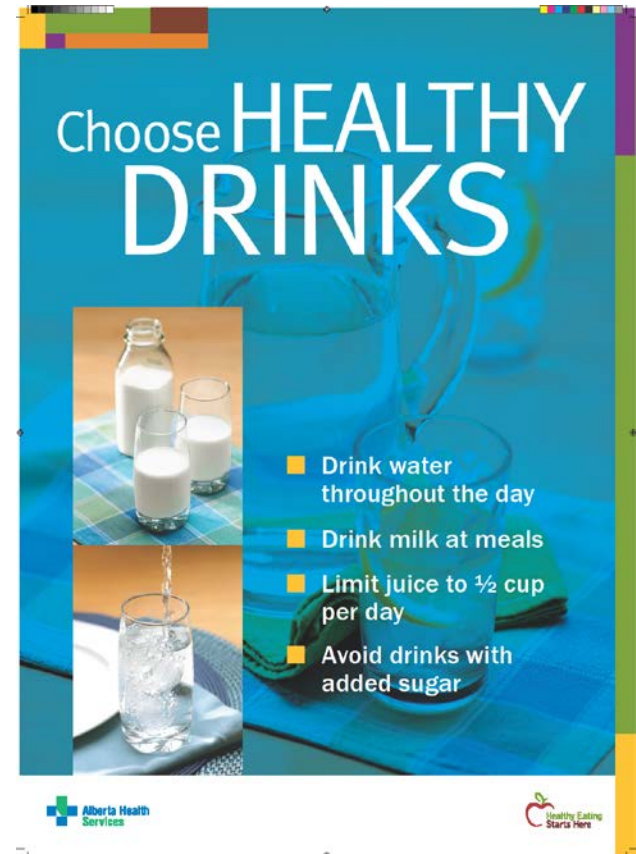
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- Fundraisers/  
Special events
- Unsupportive posters,  
books, displays



# Solutions for Healthy Eating at Child Care

- Develop or encourage a healthy eating policy
  - See Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth for directions on how to create a policy
- Supportive posters, books and visual displays



# Solutions for Healthy Eating at Child Care

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- Include healthy nutrition messages as part of program planning and activities
- Follow the division of responsibility (feeding relationship- **you decide** what and when, **the child decides** how much)

# Advocate for Healthy Eating Environments

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- Unhealthy eating is the leading cause for premature death and disability in Canada
  - Estimated 864,00 years of life lost in 2010
  - Inadequate vegetable & fruit in our diets is a significant contributor to risk of chronic disease
  
- Statistics Source: Global Burden of Disease Study 2010  
<http://www.healthmetricsandevaluation.org/gbd/visualizations/gbd-arrow-diagram>



# Advocate for Healthy Eating Environments

<b>Vascular Risk Factor</b>	<b>Years of Life Lost</b>	<b>Years of Disability</b> <i>(Disability Adjusted Life Years)</i>	<b>Risk for Premature Death</b> <i>Ranking</i>	<b>Risk for Disability</b> <i>Ranking</i>
<b>Unhealthy Diet</b>	864034	1047653	1st	1st
<b>Inadequate Fruit &amp; Vegetable Intake</b>	405946	475120	1 <sup>st</sup> rank (Sub category)	1 <sup>st</sup> rank (Sub category)
<b>Tobacco Use</b>	754083	915628	2nd	2nd
<b>Obesity</b>	480352	794956	4th	3rd
<b>Physical Inactivity</b>	350125	443108	5th	5th

# Advocate for Healthy Eating Environments

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- Policies in Alberta encouraging healthy work places and child/youth settings are voluntary
  - This has resulted in sporadic implementation in facilities such as daycares, schools, worksites and recreation facilities.
  - If we advocate for these programs, policies may be more comprehensively implemented

# Call to Action

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- Ensure organizations you belong to have policies to promote healthy eating
- An organized strong advocacy approach could result in implementation of comprehensive policies supporting healthy eating environments

# Summary

- The environment plays a part in what, where, when and how much we eat.
- Healthy eating environments make the **healthy choice, the easy choice – for everyone.**
- You can make a difference and impact healthy eating environments in organizations you belong to



# Resources

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- Eat Smart Meet Smart- How to Plan and Host Healthy Meetings, Events and Conferences
- Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide
- Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults
- Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth
- AHS Nutrition Resources for Schools:  
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2925.asp>
- Healthy Eating Environment in AHS:  
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/5234.asp>

# For More Information



[HealthyEatingStartsHere.ca](http://HealthyEatingStartsHere.ca)

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# Questions?