

Dana Lee Olstad MSc RD
Kim Raine PhD RD
Linda McCargar PhD RD
University of Alberta

Improving the food environment in recreational facilities



Are recreational facilities using the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth?

The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth were created to **ensure children have access to healthy food** in recreational facilities.

A survey of managers from 151 recreational facilities in Alberta showed:

- ✓ Healthy eating was a high priority for **only 13%** of recreational facilities.
- ✓ **50%** of facilities surveyed had heard of the nutrition guidelines but **only 6%** were using them.
- ✓ The **main barrier** to using the nutrition guidelines was a perception that healthier foods are not profitable.
- ✓ Other barriers included:
 - Some parts of the guidelines were **too complex**.
 - **It is “normal”** to find mostly unhealthy foods in recreational facilities.
 - **Limited ability and time** for staff to implement nutrition guidelines.

The full study is published in BMC Public Health 12:423, 2011.



Taking Action

Evidence shows healthy foods can be profitable:

- 1 Imitate other companies that are selling healthy food:
 - **Offer variety**
 - **Use colorful displays**
 - **Give healthy items creative names**
 - **Place healthy items next to the till**
 - **Advertise healthy daily specials**

- 2 Use the tools and resources available at www.healthyalberta.ca.

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