



**YTV Health Report (2006)**

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>objective</b></p> <p>The objective was to explore an important topic for YTV: what kids think about "healthy eating."</p> <p>Specifically, what, if any, impact do health claims have on their attitudes, behaviours (influence on parents, purchase, and consumption) and preferences.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>in the waiting room</b></p> <p>While waiting for the session to start, Kids thought about their Top 5 healthy snacks and jot down what they are, and why they like them.</p>	
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## healthy food investigation

- Incredible consistency across all kids when it comes to healthy eating.
- Favourite healthy snacks:
  - Veggies: sometimes with dip; carrots, broccoli, etc.
  - Fruit: apples, strawberries, raspberries, peaches, grapes, etc.
  - Yogurt, cereal bars.
- They actually like these healthy foods, aside from knowing that they are good for them.
  - By the time kids hit Grades 4 - 6 they've been learning about healthy food since Grade 2. In that grade, Canada's Food Guide is part of the school curriculum.
  - They also learn about nutrition at home. It seems as if most Moms take every opportunity to talk about good-for-you eating and use meal and snack times to reinforce this.
- What makes a food "healthy"?
  - *"Not a lot of calories"*
  - *"Not salty"*
  - *"Not that much sugar"*
  - *"A lot of vitamins and minerals"*
- Despite their typically healthy snacks, their actual meals are the healthiest food they eat. Snacks sometimes become treats, but meals are almost always nutritious.
  - *"When I was young Mom used to buy Fruit Roll-Ups. Now she says, did I used to buy you that?"*
- Eating healthy is important because. . .
  - *"When you grow up you might turn out a bit fat. That's not healthy for your body."*
  - *"If you don't you have not much energy and can't be active."*
- Kids saw value in both eating healthy and being active.
- They'd be reluctant to eat a snack that didn't taste quite as good but was way healthier because they already eat healthy snacks that they like the taste of.
  - *"If it was waaaay healthier I'd eat it."*
  - *"It'd be like Buckley's. It tastes awful but it works."*
- They know if a food is healthy because they've learned

what's healthy; they're not using much judgment. There's certainty around vegetables, fruit and dairy products.

- Most kids were not aware of specific food claims companies use to make food sound healthy.
  - *"They use persuasive words like 'it's good, it's healthy'."*
- Avoiding fat is something most kids agree is important.
- Some kids were aware of "trans fat" to the extent that they mostly knew it was bad for you.
  - They spoke about "zero trans fat", obviously aware of the on-pack claim.
  - Some boys even knew that there was good and bad fat; that fats aren't all bad for you.
  - However, reading packaging isn't something they do very frequently. They know a little about what they're looking for: less fat, calories, sugar; more vitamins and minerals.
- At this age, kids are almost always eating what their parents eat.
- When trying to convince their parents to buy a particular food the kids usually go with begging. Their fall back is often to offer to pay for the food or do some extra chores. Healthy foods don't need to be negotiated for.
- TV or movie characters associated with food make the products a bit more interesting.
  - However, most kids did claim that that wouldn't make them interested in a product they knew they didn't like the taste of.
  - They see the appeal of a character and know it would likely attract them.
  - The character wouldn't necessarily connote healthy or unhealthy. That would depend on the food itself.
  - Among some kids there was a bit of an assumption that products would be less healthy if a TV or movie character is used. The kids see that the product is "using" the character to gain appeal.
- Because most of the kids were at least somewhat interested in healthy eating when a company advertises that their food is healthy, it has a neutral to positive effect.
  - They don't assume that healthy tastes bad, because they know they like the taste of healthy foods.
- Showing pictures of sports seems to connote "better for

you" or "for when you are active". They assume that the products (foods or beverages came to mind, such as Frosted Flakes and Gatorade) will give you a lot of energy.

- o However, make no mistake, the kids are still using their knowledge/judgment to decide whether something is healthy or not.
- o In fact, unaided many wondered about Tony the Tiger playing baseball and soccer (good for you activity, which contributes to overall health) but that Frosted Flakes has a lot of sugar (a not good for you ingredient). The watchout here is that implying a product is healthy that doesn't measure up won't necessarily get you very far. They know the difference.