

Recommendations of the Healthy Kids Panel Report

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In May 2012, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care assembled a group of experts to serve on its Healthy Kids Panel and provide advice on how to best achieve the government's target of reducing childhood obesity. Today, the panel released a series of recommendations, informed by expert advice from health care leaders, non-profit organizations, academia, and industry to guide the government's initiatives:

Start All Kids on the Path to Health

- Educate women of child-bearing age about the impact of their health and weight on their own well-being and that of their children
- Include a standard pre-pregnancy health check and wellness visit for women planning a pregnancy and their partners
- Adopt a standardized prenatal education curriculum and ensure courses are accessible and affordable for all women across the province
- Encourage and support breastfeeding for at least the first six months of life
- Use well-baby and childhood immunization visits to promote healthy weights and enhance surveillance and early intervention

Change the Food Environment

- Ban the marketing of high calorie, low-nutrient foods, beverages and snacks to children under age 12
- Ban point-of-sale promotions and displays of high calorie, low-nutrient foods and beverages in retail settings, beginning with sugar-sweetened beverages
- Require all restaurants, including fast-food outlets and retail grocery stores, to list the calories in each item on their menus and to make this information visible on menu boards
- Encourage food retailers to adopt transparent, easy-to-understand, standard, objective nutrition rating systems for the products in their stores
- Support the use of Canada's Food Guide and the nutrition facts panel
- Provide incentives for Ontario food growers and producers, food distributors, corporate food retailers, and non-governmental organizations to support community-based food distribution programs
- Provide incentives for food retailers to develop stores in "food deserts"
- Establish a universal school nutrition program for all Ontario publicly-funded elementary and secondary schools
- Establish a universal school nutrition program for First Nations communities
- Develop a single standard guideline for food and beverages served or sold where children play and learn

Create Healthy Communities

- Develop a comprehensive social marketing program that focuses on healthy eating, active living, mental health and adequate sleep

- Join EPODE (Ensemble Prévenons l'Obésité Des Enfants- Together Let's Prevent Childhood Obesity) International and adopt a co-ordinated, community-driven approach to developing healthy communities for kids
- Make schools hubs for child health and community engagement
- Create healthy environments for preschool children
- Develop the knowledge and skills of key professions to support parents in raising healthy kids
- Speed implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Continue to implement the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy
- Ensure families have timely access to specialized obesity programs when needed

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