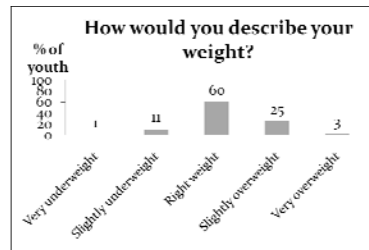


Weight and Healthy Eating

How do you describe your weight?

Youth in the survey were asked to describe their weight. Most youth 59.8% described their weight as the right weight, followed by slightly overweight (25.4%). There were no strong differences between youth of different ages and how they described their weight

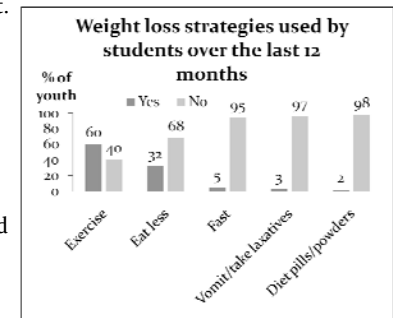


"I'll openly say it, I want to be bigger. Instead of losing weight I would rather put on weight, like muscles and stuff I guess. Like for grad, I guess if you want to lose weight to fit into your dress, I want to put on more weight and get bigger to fill out a suit kind of thing."

- Youth Focus Group Participant

Exercise and eating less most common weight loss strategies

39% of youth reported that they were trying to lose weight. Youth were asked if they used different strategies to lose weight or keep from gaining weight, over the past 12 months. The two most common ways to lose weight or keep from gaining weight among youth were to exercise for the purpose of weight loss, or to eat less. (this also includes eating fewer calories and fats). Close to 5% of youth said they had tried fasting, which means eating nothing for a period of at least 24 hours. 3.2% of youth said they vomited or took laxatives, and only 1.8% used diet pills or powders.



There was a strong difference between a youth's age and whether or not they would eat less to lose weight or keep from gaining it.

Body image varies between males and females

- ✓ Females were more likely to describe themselves as slightly or very overweight.
- ✓ Males were more likely to describe themselves as slightly or very underweight.
- ✓ Over twice as many females as males want to lose weight.
- ✓ Almost ten times as many males wish to gain weight.
- ✓ Males were more likely to say they were trying to stay the same weight or do nothing.
- ✓ More females reported exercising to stay the same weight or lose weight.
- ✓ More than double the number of females changed their diets to lose weight or to stay the same weight.
- ✓ Over 7% of females compared to 1% of males said they fasted in the previous month.



What are youth eating?

Although Canada's Food Guide recommends 7 servings of fruits and vegetables each day for females 14-18 and 8 servings for males, only 23.6% of rural youth indicated they had consumed more than 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day in the week prior to the survey. 76.4% consumed less than 5 servings. Youth were more likely to consume fruit than vegetables. There were no significant differences by sex or age in the consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Canada's Food Guide recommends 3-4 servings of milk products per day. 33.6% of students reported drinking this amount of milk. Males drank more milk than females. In addition, girls drank more fruit juice, and ate more salad and other vegetables than males.

While measures are not precise, they do suggest that nutritional education is needed for this group of rural youth

