

## CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

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### Abstract

Proper development of the nervous, immune, bone-joint system and the development of the organism as a whole largely depend on adequate nutrition during childhood. Malnutrition and disorders caused by vitamin and mineral deficiency is one of the most common causes of death in children under 5 years of age in the world. Malnutrition in the first years of life is associated with delayed cognitive development, lower intelligence quotient, lower educational attainment and behavioral problems later in life. The trend of an increase in the frequency of type 2 diabetes at a younger age is considered to be a consequence of the increase in the frequency of overnutrition and obesity in children. The goal of the research is to determine the eating habits of students age 9 and 14 years old.

The study was conducted during 2019 at the Elementary School "Mladen Stojanović" Gradiška, Republika Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The anonymous survey was conducted using a purpose-built printed survey form, which consisted of 20 questions covering the respondents' demographic data and dietary habits. The obtained results were processed with descriptive statistics, including percentage, mode, median and x2 test methods. 25 fourth grade and 25 ninth grade students participated on a voluntary basis, of which 28 were female and 22 were male.

From the research, it can be noticed that a larger number of IV grade students are directed towards proper nutrition and fruit and vegetable consumption compared to IX grade students who are directed towards inappropriate nutrition. Research has shown that both ages have in common the daily use of refined sugars and unhealthy fats. Based on the data obtained from the research, we can conclude that parents play a big role in the formation of eating habits, especially at a younger age of the child.

During the period of growing up, under the influence of various factors, individuals neglect healthy lifestyle habits. Continuous education of all age groups about the importance of healthy eating and lifestyle habits is the basis for solving the very current problems of obesity and diseases associated with an inadequate diet.

**Key words:** *Children aged 9 - 14 years, Eating habits, Differences in nutrition, Malnutrition, Obesity.*