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## **Factors Affecting Eating Habits of Adolescents**

*Himani Nakum<sup>1</sup>, Dr Nandita Thakur<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1,2</sup>DDUKK DAVV Indore

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### **ABSTRACT**

This review paper showed that the factors affecting the eating habits of adolescent need to be understand in order to develop effective nutrition interventions to improve food consumption of adolescents. Poor eating habits are important public health issue that affect the health of adolescent. Studies have shown that major factor affecting the eating habits were food preference, perceptions of healthy eating, family environment, peer influence, school influence, food advertising and lifestyle. Influence of social media on eating habits of adolescent can increase developing health issues like obesity in adulthood.

Key words: adolescents, advertisement, eating habits, , obesity , social media

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### **Introduction**

Adolescence is the stage which require special attention and protection. During this stage developing good behaviour and eating pattern help in maintaining good health and reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases in adulthood. Adolescence is also transition stage of rapid growth and development due to which high energy and other nutrients are require. Improper dietary habits and eating junk food can harm the health of adolescent which can lead to obesity, micronutrients deficiencies, can affect mental and physical health and finally influence the nutritional status of adolescent.

Eating habits is the continuous determination of people regarding what food they eat. Dietary and eating habits play important part in children and adolescents physical and mental development. Unhealthy eating habits can lead to different health consequences. Taste for food , less dietary knowledge, low personal income are some of the factors affecting unhealthy food choices, high self efficiency and healthy outcomes are the factors affecting healthy food choices. Peer pressure and family influence also affect food choices.

The major factor affecting the eating habits are food preferences, perceptions of healthy eating, family environment, peer pressure, school influence, lifestyle and food advertisement. It has been seen that in home environment, type of family food pattern food culture of the family , availability of food and purchasing of different food affect the eating habits of adolescent. Friends influence the eating habits as there are important part of adolescent life and seems to have stronger influence than parents. It is seen that female adolescent weight control is influenced by their friends and peers because eating habits is associated with increase desire to be popular and accepted. Female adolescent may change their eating habits due to impress and look good and adjust their food intake to maintain body image in front of their friends.

Junk food advertisement has been considerable impact on the eating habits of adolescent. Advertisement normally shows food items rich in fat , saturated fat , sugar , salt , sodium which are very harmful to health. Adolescents get easily carried away by these advertisement and wants to buy the advertised products. Constant Television watching and eating such food without any other activity leads to various diseases and ailments like heart problems, obesity, cholesterol which is very bad in the long term. Most of the food preferences of adolescent are result of food advertisement. This involves all type of food products, right from biscuits, chocolate to pizza , fruit juice and even healthy drinks . On the one side of advertisements , they are motivating the adolescents to try healthy drinks like Boost , Horlicks which claims to increase the height and sharp their minds and on the other side advertisement are also promoting unhealthy food habits by gripping adolescent to consume Maggie, pizza and coke which can harm their health.

Social media is an inseparable part of adolescent life. Social media is use by both food and health industries to advertise their products. The adolescent are amongst the largest users of social media. Food and beverage companies target adolescents to establish their brand name. Adolescents are capitulate by brand marketing example the companies show in their advertisement on social media their favorite celebrity which is influence the adolescent to buy unhealthy food products due to their development and vulnerability to peer pressure and reduce ability for self regulation and maturity level.

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### **Conclusion**

The major factor affecting the eating habits of adolescent were food preferences, perceptions of healthy eating, peer pressure, family environment, school influence, lifestyle, food advertisement and social media. Adolescents are at grater risk of developing chronic disease due to poor eating habits during adolescence. To change the eating habits of adolescent , parents should educate their children about healthy and unhealthy eating habits, they should not buy junk food often. School can make awareness on healthy eating habits . Government should promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables and

restrict food products with very low nutrient value. Parents should know how to read nutritional value given on the back of food products to choose right food for their children.

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