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## Awareness about healthy food habits among college going girls

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### Abstract

Many college going students still fall within the adolescent age group and show some common unhealthy eating patterns such as meal skipping, eating away from home, snacking and fast food consumption. Dietary patterns developed during adolescence may contribute to obesity and eating disorders and may increase the risk for several chronic diseases later in life. Health and nutrition of adolescents will affect the health and survival of future generations. College students are at risk for making poor dietary choices that can cause significant health problems. The study was carried out in CCS HAU, Hisar campus and hundred students (female) of university were selected randomly. The study concluded that most of the respondents had very little knowledge about the nutrients available in food. They are neither aware of about low cost recipes that are beneficial for them. This proves to be one of the major constraints in the eradication of diseases from the country especially among adolescence when their rapid increase in growth rate and nutrition plays an important role.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, awareness and knowledge

### Introduction

Many college going students still fall within the adolescent age group and show some common unhealthy eating patterns such as meal skipping, eating away from home, snacking and fast food consumption. In present India due to increased urbanization and various other factors, there is a drastic change in the dietary patterns of college students and young adults. Poor eating habits is a major public health concern among college students who experience transition into college life, during which they are exposed to stress and lack of time (Abraham *et al.* 2018) <sup>[1]</sup>. They adopt unhealthy eating habits mainly because of reduced affordability and accessibility of healthy diet on the premises and the presence of an abundance of surrounding fast food outlets. These factors also pose a barrier against embracing healthy behavior and may lead to change in eating habits and substance abuse. Detrimental habits picked up during this age generally persist in adult life (Bargiota *et al.* 2013) <sup>[3]</sup>. Dietary patterns developed during adolescence may contribute to obesity and eating disorders and may increase the risk for several chronic diseases later in life. Health and nutrition of adolescents will affect the health and survival of future generations.

In recent years, health organizations have implemented a variety of interventions to promote healthy eating behaviors of young population, yet they have had limited impact, which might be attributable to insufficient understanding of dietary habits and necessary interventions implemented in accordance with children ages. Many life style factors and poor eating habits acquired during adolescence can lead to serious diseases later in life. Healthy eating behavior during adolescence is a fundamental prerequisite for physical growth, psychosocial development and cognitive performance, as well as for the prevention of diet- related chronic diseases in adulthood (Yahia *et al.* 2008; Al-Rethaiaa *et al.* 2010) <sup>[4, 2]</sup>. The children in developing countries presently suffer from the double jeopardy of malnutrition - urban children are afflicted with problems of over-nutrition while rural and slum children suffer from effects of under-nutrition. In general adolescent girls are the worst sufferers of the ravages of various forms of malnutrition because of their increased nutritional needs and low social power. The undernourished adolescent girls thus initiate the vicious cycles of malnutrition by transmitting it to future generations. Dietary habits are one of the modifiable risk factor for both over and under nutrition.

### Objective of the Study

In the view of the above facts, the present study was planned to study about awareness about healthy food habits among college going girls.

### Detailed objectives

1. To assess the eating habits of college going girls
2. To assess the nutritional knowledge among college going girls

### Materials and Methodology

The various methodological research procedures adopted in the study have been described

### Sample selection and characteristics

#### a. Locale of the Study

The study was carried out in CCS HAU, Hisar campus Haryana (India). The campus has been selected purposively depending on the availability of the respondent and convenience of the researcher.

#### b. Selections of respondent

Hundred students (female) of university were selected randomly.

### Variables and their measurement

#### a. Independent variable

- Age
- Sex
- Religion
- Family size
- Community
- Education

#### b. Dependent variable

- Awareness
- Knowledge

### Method of data collection

For collecting the requisite information, a well-structured questionnaire was developed and pre-tested on the respondents.

### Statistical analysis

Suitable standard statistical methods was used for analysis of data and to derive the conclusion. Following are the methods used in this research:

- Frequency
- Percentages
- Weighted mean score

### Results and Conclusion

The results (Table 1) has shown that 60 per cent of the total respondents belonged to the age group 20-22 years old. All the respondents were unmarried female. The religion of all the respondents was Hinduism. Among all 35 per cent of the total respondents had medium family size and 30% of them had large family size.

**Table 1:** General profile of respondents

S.no.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1.	<b>Age</b>		
	18-20	40	60
	20-22	40	60
M	Above 22	0	0
2.	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	0	0
	Female	100	100
3.	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Married	0	0
	Unmarried	100	100
4.	<b>Religion</b>		
	Hindu	100	100
	Muslim	0	0
	Sikh	0	0
	Christian	0	0
5.	<b>Family size</b>		
	Small	35	35
	Medium	35	35
	Large	30	30
6.	<b>Household Region</b>		
	Urban	60	60
	Rural	40	40
7.	<b>Community</b>		
	Haryana	90	90
	Bengali	0	0
	Marwari	0	0
	Others	10	10

The forty per cent of the total respondents belonged to rural household. Majority (90%) of the respondents were from Haryana state. Based on the study, the results (Table 2) depicted that 90 per cent of the respondents were having knowledge about importance of green leafy in vegetables and 85 per cent of the respondents were having knowledge about importance of fruits in diet. Among all 75 per cent of the respondents were aware about importance of nutrients in diet.

**Table 2:** Awareness/knowledge about healthy eating habits

S. No.	Variable	Yes		No	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Knowledge about importance of green leafy vegetables in diet	90	90	10	10
2	Knowledge about importance of fruits in diet	85	85	15	15
3	Knowledge about importance of nutrients in diet	75	75	25	25
4	Knowledge about kitchen hygiene and sanitation	89	89	11	11
5	Awareness of fortified foods	45	45	55	55
6	Consumption of fortified foods	15	15	85	85
7	Knowledge about low cost nutritious Foods	45	45	55	55

Eighty-nine per cent of the respondents were aware about kitchen hygiene and sanitation. Among all the respondents 55 per cent of the respondents were not aware about fortified foods as well as about low cost nutritious foods.

The table 3 has indicated that out of all the variables, 40 per

cent of the respondents were fully aware about kitchen hygiene and sanitation, whereas 28 per cent of the respondents were partially aware and 32 per cent were not aware. Majority of the respondents were not aware about fortified foods.

**Table 3:** Assessment of awareness level

S. No.	Variable	Fully Aware	Partially Aware	Unaware	Weighted Mean Score
		F	F	F	F
1	Knowledge about importance of green leafy vegetables in diet	20	55	25	55
2	Knowledge about importance of fruits in diet	25	35	40	61.7
3	Knowledge about importance of nutrients in diet	23	37	40	61
4	Knowledge about kitchen hygiene and sanitation	40	28	32	62.6
5	Awareness of fortified foods	15	13	72	47
6	Consumption of fortified foods	30	45	25	60

### Conclusion

The study concluded that most of the respondents had very little knowledge about the nutrients available in food. They are neither aware of about low-cost recipes that are beneficial for them. This proves to be one of the major constraints in the eradication of diseases from the country especially among adolescence when their rapid increase in growth rate and nutrition plays an important role. The healthy eating patterns of food for the betterment of nutritional status but the general population is unaware of the same.

Nutrition education must be provided timely to the people to increase their knowledge about healthy food and also they must be encouraged to consume low cost nutritious foods and fortified foods that are easily available in the marketplace.

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