

INUSIQSIARNIQ HEALTHIER CHOICES

Arviat 2011-12

The Arviat Health Committee received funding from PHAC Innovation Strategy for obesity prevention for the year 2011. The final report was made available in March 2012. Here are some of the areas that were covered by this project.



Target Population

We are working with a child population from 4-12 years old and their families. In addition, we are also working with the community at large as the children/youth take messages into the community using various media formats.

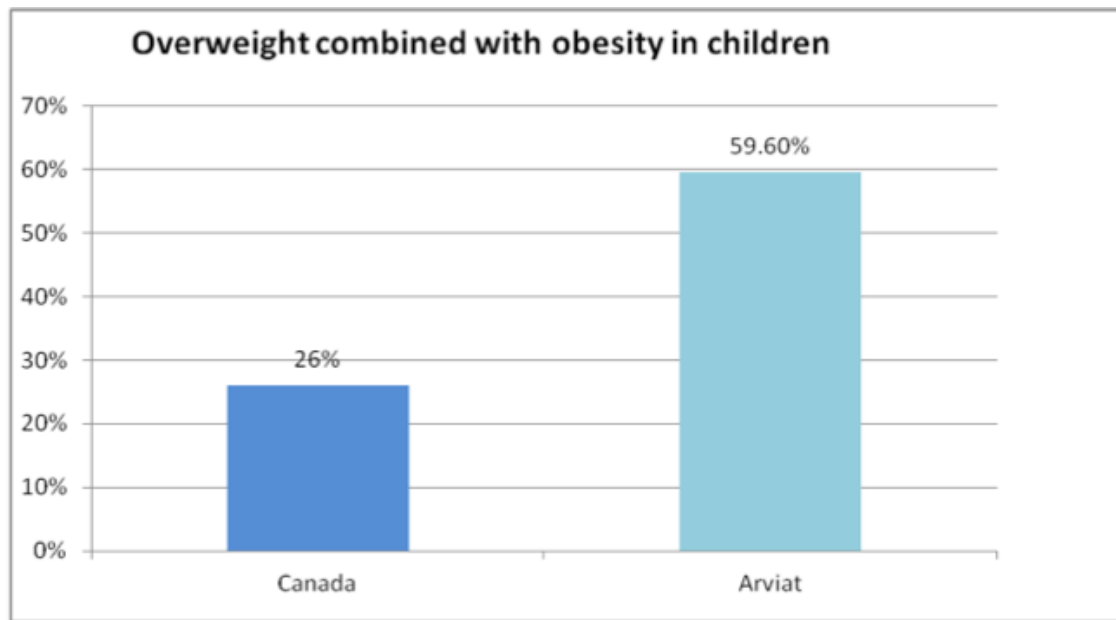


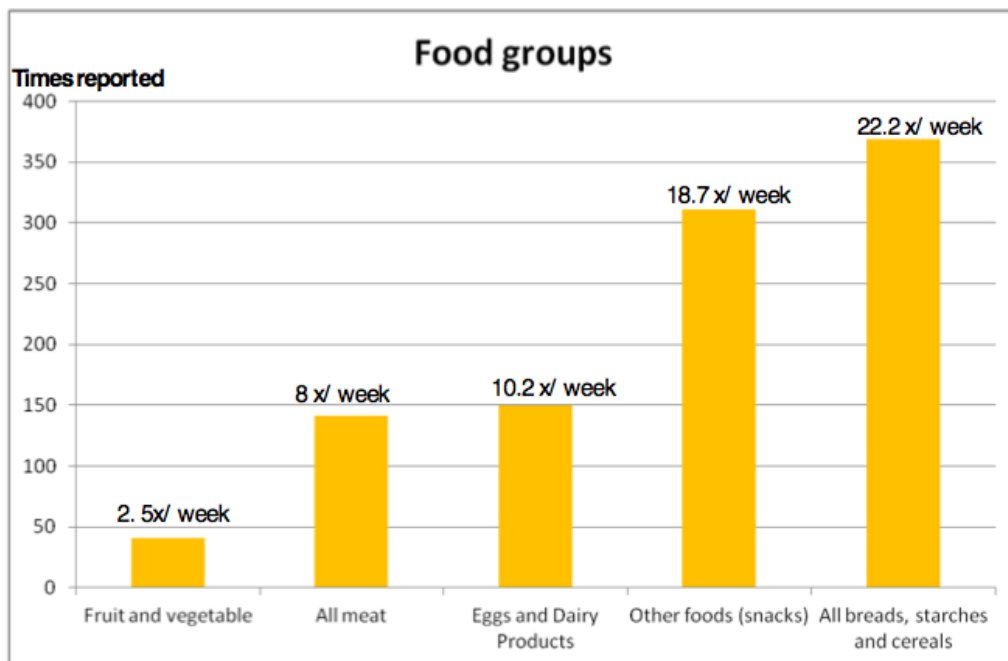
Primary activities

1. Conduct research with 60+ children to determine the current nutrition profile for children ages 4-12 in the community
2. Design key messages to promote healthier food and fitness choices
3. Work with the Aboriginal Head Start and elementary school programs to reinforce key messages and activities
4. Engage a youth advisory team to design, develop and delivery key messages for children
5. Provide a toolkit of material and activities, including lesson plans and take home pamphlets for parents about healthier choices for children

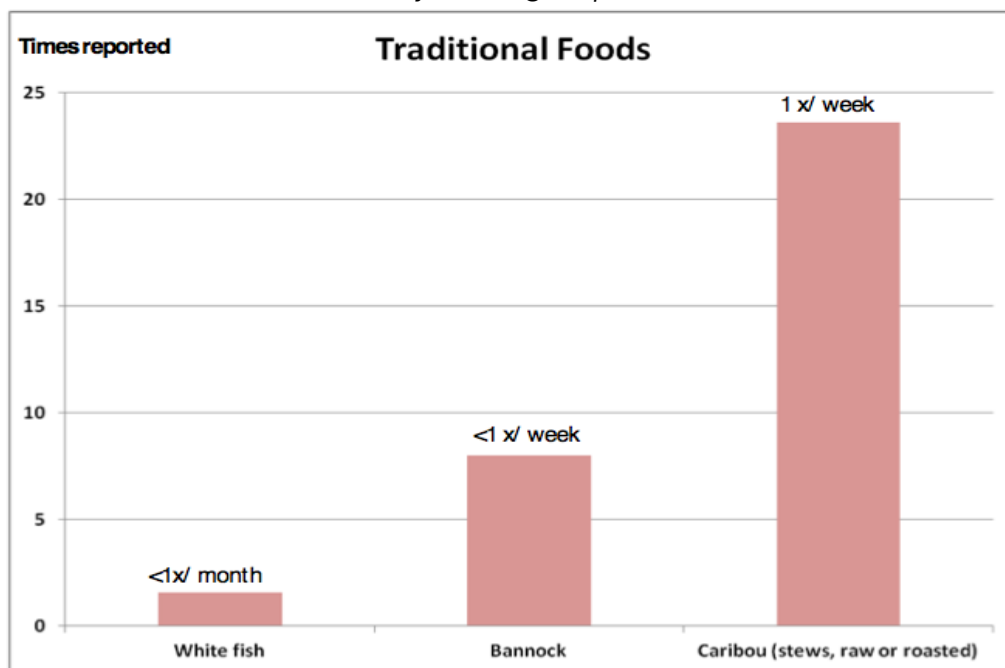
Children Nutritional Profile

This profile represents 296 Arviat children aged 6-12 years old. Our children are significantly overweight at about twice the national average.



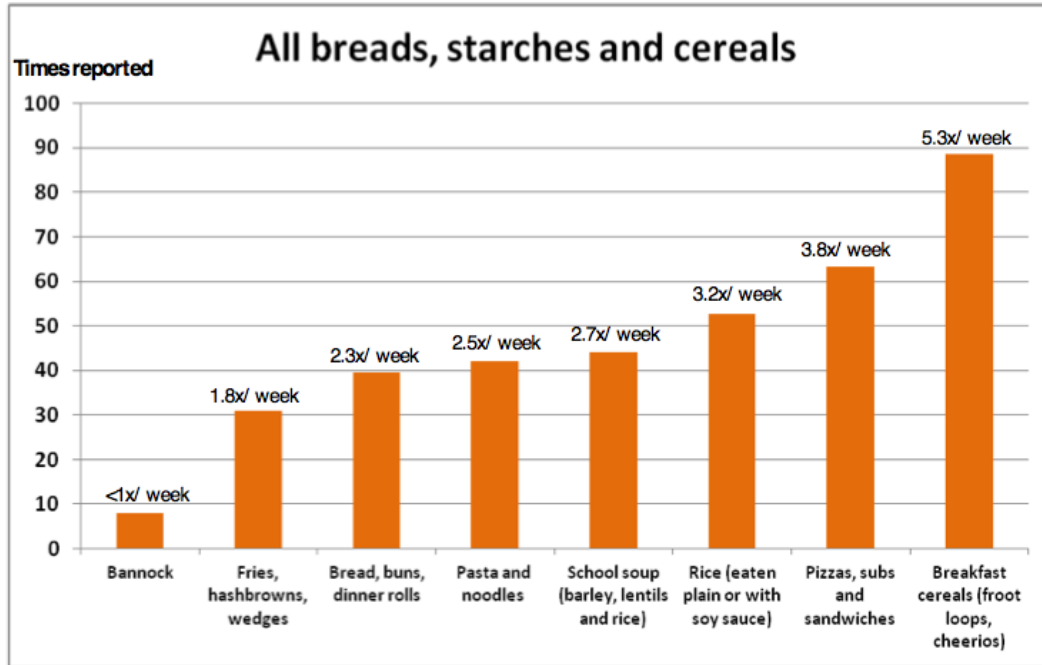


The bulk of the current child diet consists largely of carbohydrates, something not part of Inuit diet in the past. It can be assumed that Inuit children may not process carbs in the same way other groups do.

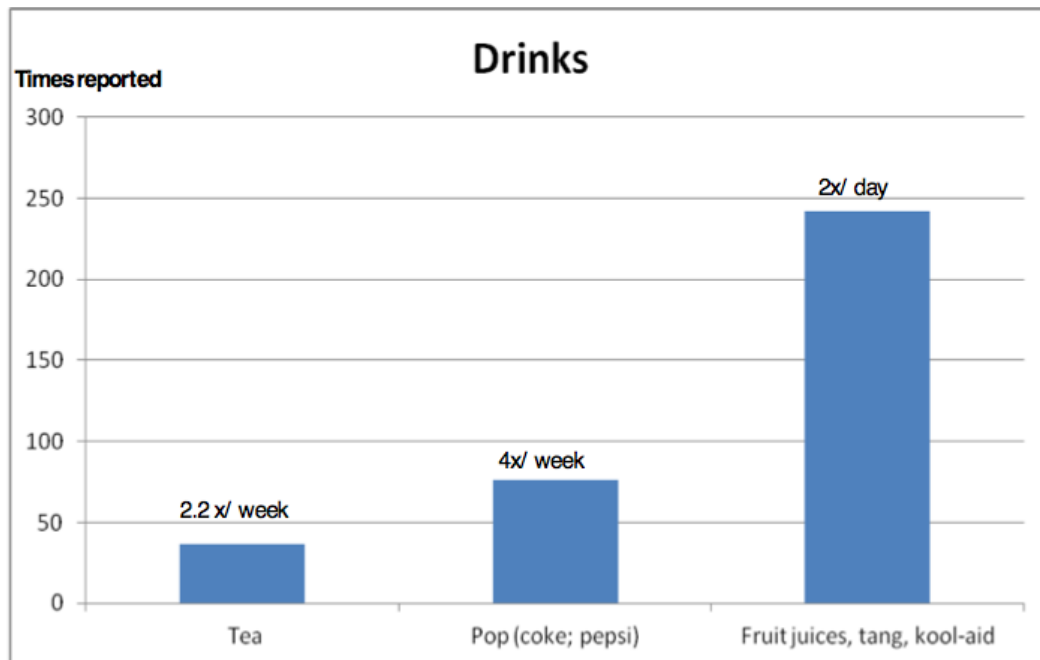


Intake of healthy country foods is severely reduced.





The types of carbohydrates being consumed are largely highly processed, over refined carbs that convert very rapidly to sugars in the body.



Sugar drinks were 26% of children's daily dietary consumption. Boys and girls consumed more fruit juices, Tang and Kool-aid than any other drink (at least 2 times a day per child). The most popular "juices" were Sunny D and frozen juice concentrate. Milk was consumed on average 6 times a week, including in cereals and tea.



Key Messages

The four key messages were developed based on the data collected from food frequency surveys. The messages were reinforced throughout the community after the school delivery of the messages was completed. These activities included a series of weekly radio shows supported by posters, information handouts, and powerpoints run over the community cable channel. Every Friday, random surveys were conducted to collect responses on the uptake of the messaging. 83% of respondents had heard or seen evidence of the messages. In the survey, respondents were asked what they had learned. There was excellent retention of the key message. Respondents were also asked for comments about how to help make healthier choices.

Fitness Promotions

Elementary school children participated in the Inuit Fitness Challenge three times across the course of the school year. There was also a pedometer walking challenge between classes and a Family Fitness Walk during the Family Weekend activities held after Hamlet Day.



Community Knowledge Translation

Young Harvester's Program - The Young Harvesters' Program is a regular after school offering as part of the high school programming. The curriculum for the 8 week course is in development. The project was identified as one of the youth designed activities to both promote fitness and to get children to eat and appreciate country foods. Many parents reported that they did not serve country food. To date, the program has a 92% graduation rate and is hugely popular with both parents and children.

Community Kitchen - The community cooking classes (36 participants) use country food in contemporary recipes. There is also a new country food diet which brought those wishing to lose weight into a support group (15 participants) that focused on country food use in a strong, protein rich food diet. In addition, a budgeting workshop (12 participants) focused on the use of country food to stretch food budgets.

Media Promotions - It is important to note that many aspects of activities implemented through the Inusiqliarniq initiative are on-going in the community. The very popular weekly radio shows are continuing and also include poster and information handout campaigns. The youth media club is continuing to develop and build on the video scripts promoting healthier choices. The community cooking and walking clubs had expanded and have sustained participation rates. The community website will soon host all of the materials developed in this project and new materials that develop through the sustained programs.

