

- 56 percent of adults and 25 percent of children in Washtenaw County are overweight or obese. Rates are even higher in black and Latino residents.
- Healthy eating policies and guidelines create environments in which residents can access the food necessary to live healthy lives.

Healthy Eating Policies & Guidelines

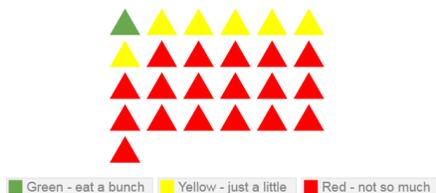
Making the healthy choice the easy choice

Every day, millions of Americans get their food from public facilities. Increasing the availability and prominent display of healthier foods and beverages in these locations is a simple strategy to promote healthier eating. Washtenaw County Public Health (WCPH) is working to create environments in which the healthy options are the easy options by implementing healthy food guidelines in community settings and through local policy change.

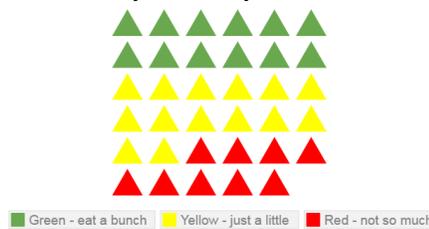
In 2016, WCPH partnered with Washtenaw County Children's Services to implement nutrition guidelines in their youth incentive store, where residents can buy food, beverages and other items with coupons rewarded for good behavior. On average, there are 28-35 residents in the facility. The Assistant Director and staff were interested in offering healthier options to the youth during their stay.

The nutrition guidelines selected for Children's Services were fashioned after South Dakota Department of Health's 2015-2016 Munch Code. These guidelines classify items as **GREEN** (eat a bunch), **YELLOW** (just a little) and **RED** (not so much). According to these guidelines, almost all of the items in the store when first surveyed were classified as red, with only one item classified as green. After holding taste tests with residents and discussions with staff, a new list of foods and beverages was created (12 green, 14 yellow, and 9 red). Price, place, and promotion strategies were also implemented to highlight the healthier items.

Variety & Quality of Foods BEFORE



Variety & Quality of Foods AFTER



Since the store's update in September 2016, youth residents are purchasing all the newly added items. There has been no resistance to the new guidelines. According to the Assistant Director, Kevin Mitchell, **"A healthy diet with nutritious food options [is] vitally important. Our collaboration with Public Health to improve our youth store has been essential in making significant strides to improve the health and well-being of the youth we serve. The collaboration has been a tremendous success."**

In addition to improving the health of the public, success stories like this set a positive example for the community; increase the availability of healthier foods from suppliers to meet new consumer demand; and build awareness of, and support for, healthier food and beverage options among decision makers.

What is WCPH doing to address this issue?

- Working with Children's Services, Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation, the City of Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation, Food Gatherers and others to implement healthy vending and food policies in community settings.
- Collaborating with the Washtenaw County Food Policy Council and partners to develop language and strategies around local policy change.
- Sharing information with the Board of Health and partners to garner support for bringing a local policy proposal to the Board of Commissioners.

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More info <http://bit.ly/WCbuilding>

