

## Providing Healthy Food in Primary and Secondary Schools of Saudi Arabia to Significantly Reduce Obesity and Improve Health by Using the Star Rating System for a Healthier Diet

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**Abstract :** Overweight and obesity have now become an epidemic around the globe, both in high-, as well as low-income regions. It is important to use preventive measures that are cost-effective. Schools are the essence of building societies and engaging them in healthy nutrition will offer a way to reach individuals at an early stage in life, with many positive and significant impacts. Aim: Provide healthy food in schools of children aged 5 to 18 years old. Methods: Distributing healthy food to a school and implementation of a star rating system for healthier foods, with five stars for the healthiest option to a half a star for the unhealthiest. The stars system was developed in Australia and should motivate children to consume the healthier nutritional options. Each canteen should be allowed a minimum of 3.5 stars rating for the food provided. Outcome Measurement: Body-mass-index as an indicator of overweight and obesity should be checked at the beginning of the study annually for five years for all children. Another side measurement is the performance by checking the grades and a questionnaire on eating habits at the start of the study and yearly. Expected Outcome: A lower health-risk behaviour and assistance to children in reaching their potentials as they will adapt to eating healthier. Nutrition during childhood has the potential to prevent obesity, type 2 diabetes, dental diseases, hypertension and, in later life, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and a variety of cancers. In Australia NSW starting from 2016 is expecting a 5% reduction of childhood overweight and obesity by 2025. As for Saudi-Arabia, it is expected to have an, even more, reduction by 2023 as a lot of our children are canteen-dependent. Conclusion: Introducing healthy food in schools is a preventative method that would have significant influence on the reduction of the prevalence of obesity in Saudi-Arabia and improves its general health.

**Keywords :** food, healthy, children, obesity, schools

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